Fire Lily

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/52958491.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Bella Crawford/Jack Crawford, Alana Bloom/Margot Verger
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Dr. Frederick Chilton, Jack Crawford, Alana Bloom, Original Characters, Matthew Brown (Hannibal)
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Soulmates, Soulmate-Identifying Marks, Murder Husbands, Hannibal Lecter Loves Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter is a Cannibal, Top Hannibal Lecter, Someone Help Will Graham, Morally Grey Will Graham, One-sided Affection Matthew Brown/Will Graham, Smitten Hannibal Lecter, Possessive Hannibal Lecter, Caring Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham Loves Hannibal Lecter, Bottom Will Graham, Dream Sex, Mildly Dubious Consent, First Time, Will Graham Has Encephalitis
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of All My Hannibal Stories, Part 1 of Fire Lily
Stats:	Published: 2024-01-11 Updated: 2024-03-29 Words: 28,583 Chapters: 14/?

Fire Lily

by Nightcrawler247

Summary

Soulmate AU where you recognize your soulmate the first time you lock eyes and confirm it when a matching mark appears on both of you the next day.

Will is an orderly at Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane who locks eyes and bonds with Hannibal fucking Lecter.

Will is determined to ignore it even happen and Hannibal is determeined to wooe his beloved soulmate.

It doesn't help Will gets assigned a regular shift watching Hannibal and later forced to interact with him more as Hannibal consults on the tooth fairy case.

Notes

Tag ideas welcome

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

Will always knew he'd end up in a place like Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane.

He just thought it would be as a patient and not an orderly. Certainly not the half orderly half guards required of Baltimore Hospital staff. It was almost amusing that this was how it turned out. While he wasn't able to get into the FBI because of a failed psych evaluate he still considered his life a success seeing as he ended up on this side the bars rather than the other side with the patients he know looked after, and out for, every day.

Will didn't really *do* regret when it came to things like this. Dwelling on what could be's was just not his thing for something as mundane as a career choice. The FBi had always been a long shot knowing his mental condition he was glad he'd gotten as far as couple successful years on the force before the profiling go to be too much for him. A couple more years teaching after that until now when he felt the need for another career change.

Frankly he was tired of any form of profiling for a while. What better place than a place where everyone had already been successfully profiled to work. Sure, Chilton could be a little annoyingly smug as his boss knowing the renowned former classmate of his now worked for him but he rarely had to even see that guy and outside of that the job was simple, paid well, and was just the right amount of crazy to make Will feel more sane about his self. It was kind of perfect so far.

"Okay, so you have to remember *never* hand them the medicine through the bar, *always* use the tray and *always* ensure they've backed away first. Even after that stay alert. We've lost too many good employees like that." The woman said to him demonstrating for Will how to give the patients their medicine. He was still training after all so he spent everyday shadowing someone until he got the swing of things and could work on his own.

"I understand." will said, reminding himself to give verbal confirmation because it wasn't always clear on his face he was listening.

"Good, you'll get the hang of this in no time." She said kindly to him. She seemed a sweet woman Will thought. He wondered how she ended up with a job like this and not in one better for people with normal dispositions like hers.

"Okay, so you try the next one." She said sweetly handing him the cup of pills and pushing the cart with her other hand as they moved to the next cell once the patient had proven they'd swallowed their meds. Will did his best not to shudder at her soft chocolate color hands touched his own. Trying not to make his aversion to physical contact known. He didn't want to give any of his coworkers anything that could compare him to the people they collectively looked after. It was a comparison he wasn't fond of as a cop and professor. He was hoping to avoid it in this, so far, vastly better job.

Will took the pills and held them firmly before telling the patient to back away and to the wall. His voice was clam and while not raising above a normal volume firm and authoritative

like he'd been talk. No need to be aggressive but also couldn't show weakness. Georgina watched with a calm smile still on her face. Looking for any faults in his actions and only planning to interrupt if she saw any. Will placed the pills in the drawer and back away before allowing the patient to come up and take them.

They watched as the pills were taken and, knowing the drill, the patient showed their tongue and gums to prove it had been swallowed then drunk water for good measure. Will was debating pointing out the patient could still be hiding the pill in their throat after that when they saw another orderly rushing over to them. Not in a way that spoke to something being wrong but definitely enough for them to know they were needed.

"Georgina, boss needs all hands on deck in the high security wing in thirty minutes." he said once he was close enough to them. Georgina, raised a confused brow. When she was supervising it was usually during the easier shifts as she was the go-to for training new personal and managing he calmer patients who had taken a liking to her and her team. It was rare that she or her team ever had to help in high security wing unless some one had been hurt or a patient escaped.

"For what?" She asked, curious, knowing she had the time.

"Not sure but apparently they guy over there are pretty low staff with it being the slow season and half of the remining staff getting that flu that's been going around." He explained calmly. She sighed a little annoyed but nodded in understanding.

"Will, we'll have to do this later. How about you-" before she could finish giving him direction the guy interrupted again.

"Sorry, but him to." He said and she raised both brows not just annoyed but concerned now.

"It's only his third day." She said. She did NOT like throwing her new recruits into the fire so soon like that. She wasn't above arguing this even to Chilton.

"Just bring him along and if you think the task is too much too soon send him to the break room." He advised. He was planning to do the same with his own team over in the women's wing right now. She still looked uncomfortable at the idea. She turned to Will fully now.

"How do you feel about this?" She asked. Always deferring to her team when she was considering what was best for them. Will was taken aback by the consideration, unuse to that kind of treatment from a superior.

"...I'm fine with it. I can't say much without knowing what we'll be doing." Will said with a shrug and she still looked concerned.

"If it helps to know I do have some history as an officer so anything physically asking or subduing violent people doesn't worry me too much." Will said more for her benefit then his.

"Ah, he'll be fine." The other guy said before turning to walk off now.

"Twenty minutes, remember." He threw over his shoulder before heading out.

“I guess, we’re doing this.” Georgina said with a sigh before turning back to the cart.

“Come on, Will. Let’s get this row done first before heading over there.” She said and Will nodded in understanding.

Georgina took over for the rest of their patients in that row again to hurry along.

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Will couldn’t help but take in the drastic difference between the common patients and high security one facility. It was like going from just a weirdly guarded nursing home to a real prison. Even the coloring was much darker and different. The architecture not designed for more pleasant and calming scenery here but rather a more traditional style designed to inspire penitence instead of serenity.

They came to a large staff room filled with most of the orderly that were here today and even some of the security guards who typically never left their post by cameras or door ways. Whatever they were going to do clearly took enough precedence that they were pulled from those positions. Will would be worried if he wasn’t damn sure by now Georgina would let him sneak off if he needed to.

He must have been looking worried in the crowd because a shoulder rubbed his own and he looked over to see Georgina smiling calmly at him in that reassuring way of hers and her eyes clearly asking a question if he was okay. Will wondered if that’s the same concern mother usually showed to their children. He could see why the woman was so well liked even by the patients. Will lip twisted up awkwardly as he tried to smile reassuringly and she chuckled but looked away and back up towards the front of the room reassured he was fine.

Will let the forced smile drop and leaned closer to the women. While he didn’t like being so in other peoples space or having them in his it was better than being so close to the other stranger in the room. At least he was familiar with her. Once Will felt a comfortable distance from others he started to people watch.

Unable to help his wandering eyes. Seeking out people on his new team and those who seem to be on others together. Who seemed to be here the longest and who seemed to be new like himself. He also couldn’t help but notice a few people’s soulmate marks. They were hard to miss as some even had it right on the sides of their faces, unable to be hidden behind the full body uniforms of the Hospital. Though Will would assume they weren’t exactly something people were trying to hide in the first place.

From what he’s observed people tended to take pride in their marks and were more inclined to show them off rather than hide them. Will himself wouldn’t know for sure as he has received his yet. The marks only showing up only after one met the eyes of their soul mate and then went to sleep. Appearing by the time they woke up. Will always thought them an

interesting design of their natural biology. Given you already recognized your soulmate by the look it could seem unnecessary to also have a mark on top of that.

But when you consider the need to unspokenly show you were taken, or take into account memory impairments or eye contact that happened too fast ect. Natured seemed to have good reason to have marks along with recognition. Besides what made them most interesting is what the marks symbolism could tell one about their bond in question.

Soulmate mark interpretation was practically a science at this point. A whole sub-section in the field of psychology that while many had a basic inkling for their own selfish or simply curious reasons, it took years of intense study to become an expert in interpretation. Will himself had taken enough classes to be a bit above the basic citizen in interpreting but nothing extensive.

Like for instance he knew that the flying bird on the young man's hand to his right likely meant he and his partner both had commitment issues but the small plant held in its mouth shaped like to rings locked around each other meant they would be able to commit to each other, but he didn't know why it was the color blue or why it was positioned on the back of his hand.

He also knew the man with the soul mate mark on his face and his soulmate were likely very possessive of each other and maybe even exhibitionists with the blant obviousness of it's position but he had no idea what that shape even is or even what else could be distinguished from the mark. He hoped to not have something so obvious should he ever find his own soulmate. Having something so imitate in his life so broadcast to others made him uncomfortable to think about.

Will was pulled from his thoughts by Chilton finally entering the room. Looking mild haggard and annoyed. He walked up to the front of the room and onto a small stole to be seen more clearly across it by everyone. Will couldn't help but think how it also gave him the perfect position to look into every single persons eyes in the room. Chilton was one of those more desperate single people who, to an uncomfortable level, always made a point to meet people eyes in hopes of finding their soulmate sooner. Will could understand the desire to do so but he was truly excessive about this. He remembered how uncomfortable it was to dodge his eyes during his interview process without seeming rude at the time. Only conceding to a glance when Chilton wouldn't take the hint. The disappointed man letting it go afterwards and not insisting on eye contact.

"Upon our bi-annual deep clean of the high security patients' cells we have found an outbreak of black mold." He said and a chores of understanding noises went around the room. A collective understanding of what was happening going around the room with everyone but the new recruits like Will.

"What does that mean for us?" Will leaned over and asked his super lowly. She seemed about to answer but Chilton beat her to it with his speech.

"As you all are aware this means well have to move the high security patients to temporary cells until this is delt with. I have haven't been given a full estimate of what the damage is yet

but it seems we may need to undergo completely rebuilding this wing of the hospital." he said with a look of tiredness that only came with running an Insititute this big.

Annoyed groans could be heard from the people that regularly worked that wing. You always had to be so much more careful when it came to tending to the patients in their temporary cells because of the lack of amenities and proper security for such high risk personal they had and the thought of doing that for the duration of rebuilding sounded terrible. Sighs could be heard coming from other teams too as they knew they'd be needed to help pick up slack until the high security teams had their resorces back.

"Now, we are very short staffed today but we can not reasonably leave those people down there with such a toxic fumes while being aware of it. So, well have to pull together what we can for a speedy and efficient mass exodus before the end of the day. Which is why I've gathered all the spare personal we could." he continued and everyone, including Will pretty much understood where this was going now.

"You be broken up into groups of four. Two to subdue the patient while two more strap them into the portable gurney and all four to escort them to their new temporary cells." Chilton said and someone raised their hand.

"Yes?" Chilton asked pointing at them.

"Will they be sedated?" he asked and Chilton sighed again.

"There was a delay in our medicinal delivery so no. We don't have enough to sedate them all for transfer so a couple guards will be on standby with the sedatives we do have in case one of the patients tries anything." he explained, and they all looked visibly uncomfortable doing this without sedation but raised no disputes. At least there would be guards on standby.

"If you don't feel ready for this, let me know now." Georgina said leaning down to whisper in his ear. He looked over at the woman. Taking in her grey streaks of hair and smile lines by her eyes. Her sturdy but still womanly body and the roughness of her hands that came only from hard labor. If she could do this then an ex-cop certainly should be able to.

"I can handle it." he said nodding confidently and she looked pleased at the attitude. Not questioning it any further.

"Alright then, everyone line up, I'll form teams and assign patients." Chilton said and people began to fall in and be paired off. Will got in line with Georgina behind him. Prepared to receive his first real assignment on the job.

What an exciting first couple of days.

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Dr. Hannibal Lecter the 8th

What a pretentious sounding name Will thought as he got his assigned teammates and their assigned inmate, seemingly chosen by random. If the way Chilton was just point and calling off names on his list was anything to go by. Though he will say the man seemed to have sense enough to put at least on regular worker for this wing in each team to guide the less experiences orderlies on this side.

“Alright team, despite his reputation and past crimes we actually got one of the easier inmates to deal with.” their impromptu leader said.

“Dr. Lecter is for the most part very agreeable so long as we don’t work him up with anything. That doesn't mean let your guard down around him! He like all these patients has had his fair share of grizzly attacks against the staff. It really just depends on his mood for the day. If we’re lucky he’ll be too pleased with the scenery change to be difficult.” he said and the others were nodding now.

They all knew at least the basics of the man's crimes. He was big news when he was arrested after all but to be honest that had been so above Will pay grade at the time he hadn’t paid too much attention to the crime. Cannibalism in crimes weren’t actually all that rare but rather the excessiveness of the mans was what brought so much attention. That and his previous high standing in society. Will had never really paid him much mind, especially after he was caught. There was never a need. He may reconsider that after seeing the man today. He was always the curios sort like that after all.

“Okay, you two are the biggest so you’ll be subduing. You and I will be strapping him in.” The man said pointing at himself and Will. Makes sense, he’s had the most experiences strapping them in quickly and Will seemed to have nimble fingers. There was a collective understanding of their plan and how they were going to do this. Their team leader raised his hand to show Chilton they were ready. They were sent off to go in. Only three teams were going at a time to make the chance of chaos as low as possible.

Will felt odd walking in with his own team. Having been so use to sole work in everything he did he was a little thrown by how team driven this job was. He found though he didn’t mind too much. While they worked in teams often they didn’t actually have to socialize, everything they did was very job focused and no one would blame you for not wanting to get personal in a place like this.

Will noticed that Georgina was in one of the two teams that went with them. Her team stopping at the third to last cell down the security hall. The next team after them and Will and his team going all the way to the end. The inmates, those who could be reasoned with, had been informed what was happening to avoid unnecessary hostility. They found in the past that trying to surprise them with any big changes led to more problems than just being straight forward about what was going on.

That being said, Chilton hadn’t given them much more then their was black mold in their cells and they’d need to be moved temporarily to new cells until it was delt with.

By the time their reached their inmates cell the others orders could already be heard being directed to their inmates. Will couldn’t help but noticed they were much more aggressive and

hostile then with other patients in his usual wing. Not just authoritative but a promise of pain in those tones should the patients act out.

When they got to where they could see inside his cell Will was surprised to see how well kept it was. While the other patients' cells looked just like prison cells and were filthy and unkempt, by their own making, Dr. Lecter's cell looked more like an office with a small neatly fixed up bed than anything else. He even had a book self lining the back of it. While there weren't many books in there, a safety precaution likely in case he tried to throw them, based on their titles they were very academic and difficult reads for the average person. He also noticed the occasional classic fiction, such as Moby Dick. Dr. Lecter was reading one of his books when they arrived.

"Put the book down please Dr. Lecter." Their leader said and Will couldn't help but notice the 'please'. While his tone was just as aggressive as the other team leaders' the words themselves were rather polite all things considered. Dr. Lecter looked up at them and the team sent to get him. He let out a bothered sigh and put the book aside before standing up.

He didn't say anything but held his hands up and put them behind his head before getting to his knees. Will and the leader stood ready at the side as the other two opened the cell and went him. Cuffing him and putting the muzzle on his face quickly before helping to pull him to his feet.

Dr. Lecter was walked over to them and cooperated as he was lifted onto the gurney that was tilted forward and all the way up so it was standing upward. An easier transfer position than if it was laying flat.

Once he was in Will and the leader set to work strapping him in the many cuffs on the gurney. Focusing first on the straps that required both of them to do then moving to the individual ones. The other two watching all the while in case he tried anything.

The team leader finished his side very quickly. Will a little slower behind him but just as efficient in the sturdiness of the cuffs. It was only when Will was finishing up the last cuff on his hand when a loud commotion was heard at the front of the hall.

It was Georgina team. None of them could help the reaction to look over and watch as one of the more deranged patients managed to start running with one of his legs attached to the gurney still. Having pushed the others out the way. Will watched as Georgina got up and hard rushed him. Crashing his body to the ground hard and stabing him quickly in the thigh with a sedative a hard and determined look on her face. Reminding Will of the many military personal he had met.

'Ah, that's why she works here.' Will couldn't help but think.

None them had noticed how Dr. Lecter's far too lose hand had gone over to grab at Will's wrist. Not knowing the damage he planned to cause but certainly going to cause a commotion as well. Will turned quickly when he felt bare skin on his own, his and Dr. Lecter's eyes' locking.

Just like that Will's world turned upside down.

He could feel it, that sudden sense of knowing and he could see it reflected Dr. Lecter's own, now wide, eyes. It was not even a fraction of a second after that Will jerked his own eyes away hurriedly, as if that could reverse what just happen. He quickly finished strapping the man in and likely tighter then necessary before stepping away and over to the end of the gurney. All of them taking post at a corner of it before laying it flat while they moved it. The distance too far to safely move it quickly through the halls standing. There was risk of it tilting.

Will was glad for that as it meant he didn't have to see Dr. Lecter staring a hole into the back of his head, he certainly did feel it though.

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Will sighed as he looked over his body in the bathroom mirror.

It was the day after the worst day of his life. He'd bonded with a fucking insane cannibal. He'd hoped beyond belief when he got home the next day that it had all just been in his imagination but the big ass soul-mark on his body he was gazing at said otherwise.

There's is a large flame like image of a poisonous Fire Lily flower that curves and wraps around his hip and drifts down to his upper thigh and goes all the way up to where his ribs start. It was wide enough to reach his navel and the center of his back on the other side. Will mind was already running rampant analyzing the mark on his skin and the type of relationship it means for him and Hannibal. It spells of burning passion from the flames like design of the flowers, beautifully poisonous and toxic from the flower itself and incredibly intense and all consuming form the sheer size of the mark. Will is just thankful that it's somewhere that can be hidden and not on his face or anything like that.

He wonders if he could pass it off as a drunken mistaken tattoo from youth but knows wouldn't work because of the dark, almost black, red shimmering gleam it gives off that a tattoo wouldn't be able to do. Will is unsure what the shine of the tattoo could mean but it certainly makes the mark stand out even more. He was unwilling to go to a real interpreter to confirm his thoughts and give him further insight as he feared it ever being connected back to Hannibal.

Will slammed his hands against the counter and made Buster, one of his many dogs, who'd been in their with him jump slightly in surprise. Will sighed and rubbed his ear in apology. He just couldn't believe this was happening to him. He never had the best of luck in life but he certainly didn't think it was this bad.

His only save and grace was his sheer will power which has allowed him to reject the bond so far. He was not going to let Dr. Lecter in his head anytime soon. He had no desire to know what that man was feeling or to share his dreams with him. He would sooner get a lobotomy than do that. No matter how much probing he felt form the other side of the bond last night and even now he wasn't going to give in.

Will looked back at himself and into the reflection of his own eyes.

“You are not gonna let this beat you.” He muttered under his breath to himself with a resolute nod before going to get his uniform.

He would give this no more thought. He would not acknowledge it any more than he already had. He’d push it down, he’d ignore the mark, he’d force the bond away, and he’d make sure he never had to see Hannibal Lecter again.

Chapter 2

Things have been going pretty good for Will over the last two weeks all things considered.

It was still all hands on deck for monitoring the high secutiry patients. Since their current cells were not at the standard of their previous ones a guard or orderly was being placed by each cell with rotating shift every three hours so that they could still get other work done for the day. It would be the new schedule for everyone until the new cells would be ready or people volunteererd, prompoted, or more were hired for a more permannet position doing watch.

Will had managed to ensure Dr. Lecter was never in his route. He was always quick to put in his schedule request and to make sure even those patients weren't anywhere near him so he wouldn't have to so much as glimpse the cannibal.

Out of sight out of mind truly was a brilliant expression because with Will avoidance of the man and refusal to acknowledge their bond he's felt it began to weaken. He would say he's successfully achieved those lowest level of power a bond could possibly have. A nice ignorable presences in the very back of his head. Sure, he'd never be able to completely remove the man from his mind but he certainly can make him forgettable. Soon, Will thinks, he won't even notice that background presence and it will be just like it always been through his life and this can go back to being the best job he's ever had.

"Will Darling!" An annoying voice called drawing Will out of his contemplation over his lunch. A tired sigh leaving his mouth.

He braced himself for the arm he knew was going to slap over his shoulder in a second. He was not disappointed when Matthew Brown, his clingy coworker, came over and sat entirely too close next to him.

Will and Matthew had one of the first shifts in the high security wing together. Will being referred to him as his go-to man for questions as he was actually a part of the high security team of orderlies and was more use to dealing with them. Matthew for whatever reason had taken a liking to Will and was not shy about it at all.

Will has yet to find good reason to reject his entirely too touchy friendship and avoid the obvious feelings for Will he liked to broadcast every chance he got. So, he just put up with it. He had to work with the man for the next few months minimum while the cells were fixed, so he just put up with it.

He missed sweet non-touchy Georgina.

It wasn't without it's perks though. Apparently the man was pretty influential on this side of the hospital and was more than happy to cater to most of Will needs and request, like helping him avoid a shift guarding The Chesapeake Ripper.

“Have you checked the schedule today?” Matthew asked suddenly not bothering with his typical evening routine of bothering Will a little first before getting to his point.

“No.” Will said with a raised brow. Their schedule was made with the entire month in mind so, Will had just memorized it and not bothered to check it any time soon.

“Well, you better look it up. Some people called out sick and a couple more got hurt by a prisoner.” He said.

“Patient.” Will corrected on reflex like He’d heard Georgina do often during his training. Matthew just chuckled.

“I love that sense of humor of yours.” He said with disgustingly over the top loving eyes he did just to make Will uncomfortable and a hand on his cheek. As if he could trigger a soulmate response by doing that enough times.

This time Will did slap his hand away. It was just too much touching now. Matthew didn’t complain. He often said he liked it when Will was mean. Will often said he was disappointed in himself Matthew was the only friend he’d managed to make here. That always got a laugh and yet another invitation from Matthew to go on some cliche date. Will was just glad the man wasn’t sensitive.

“Check the schedule Love!~” Matthew said again, with over the top affection and a pat of his hand on Will’s shoulder. He knew better then to go in for a cheek kiss after the first time he tried it and Will almost given him a black eye on principle. Which he claims was the sexiest response he’d gotten in ages.

Matthew then left the room in a hurry. Liking having already been on a shift of some kind and neglect his work long enough to come bother Will before heading off again. Most days, Will couldn’t tell if he was trying to be welcoming or to scare Will off from the job.

Will let out a sigh once he left and then got up to go over to the board hanging in their staff break room. He looked over and saw that it had in fact changed. His name hadn’t move around much but enough that he did have to pay attention to the changes, rework some things in his mind.

He’d had a couple extra shifts in the with some patients he hadn’t delt with before and would need to learn where they were even located. He also noticed his usual time for his typical patients were moved around by and couple hours or sometimes just by half hours. Nothing too bad so far, just meant a bit more stand around guarding than anything else.

It all seemed fine for the most part. That is until Will’s eyes locked on a name he was scheduled for a shift for. One, Dr. Hannibal Lecter the 8th scheduled for three pm that day.

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Chapter 3

Will did everything in his power to try and switch shifts with someone before three pm.

Apparently, there was a reason he was schedule for him despite making clear how much he wanted to avoid that. There really was just no one else to take that position with how short staffed they were now. It had alarmed Will enough; he even considered quitting right then and there but knew that he couldn't do that without drawing attention to himself.

So, he did all he could to prepare for the inevitable. He first borrowed (stole) Matthew's uniform hat so he'd have something to better hide his features and figured out exactly where the man's cell was and was actually glad to see it was isolated more than any of the others away from everyone else. If he did try to bring anything up nobody would hear except Will. Will made sure that he would be able to swiftly and quietly change shifts and hopefully unnoticed by Hannibal himself. Finally, he did the one drastic thing he allowed himself.

He took off his glasses and tucked them in his shirt pocket.

That may not sound so bad, but Will was, as his dad so elegantly put it, blind as a bat. He couldn't see a single thing without them and that would ensure he wouldn't be seeing anything of Hanibal Lecter. A desperate move not to spark the bond at all and bring back what he worked so hard to smoother with indifference. While it made it a little harder to find his way to the hall in question it gave him a burst of confidence not to have them on.

"Oh good, you're here. I been here for six hours man. They double booked me." The guard said lowly in relief when he saw Will. Clearly not used to this type of work and not happy to have to spend most of his day doing it. Will, unwilling to give his voice away for Lecter to learn, just gave a weak smile of sympathy and nodded for the man to leave while he took over.

Using his hand to run over the table casually and find his way to the chair without his glasses. Once he was sitting, he'd be fine. The man thanked him again and then went off to do God knows what. Probably get back to work in his usual wing. Will let out a nervous sigh as everything seemed to be going well so far. From what he assumed the blurry visage in the cage was likely holding a book and fully engrossed in it. Too much to bother looking up at his new guard.

It was almost the entire shift of silence that made Will finally relax and sigh in relief at having not been noticed. The new guard will be here soon and Will will have made it through this with minimum effort. Finally allowing himself to lean back against the chair he was sitting in and even consider putting his glasses back on given his back was mostly to the cage since the table was next to the cell and not in front of it. Will was peaceful mood was ruined practically minutes later after he finally let himself go when he finally heard Hannibal's voice.

"Is that you, Mylimasis?" An accented and affection voice asked. A breathless and hope filled tone underlying it.

Just his luck right?

Will very pointedly didn't respond, but he was sure the way he tilted the hat further down and deliberately looked away and to his right gave him away. He heard a chuckle behind him and could feel his lips tighten in frustration with himself.

"I was sure you had glasses last I saw you." He said with a curious hum and a level of certainty that only came with obsessing over a memory and ensuring you had every detail exact in your mind. He must have seen them sticking out of Will's chest pocket.

"Ah, very smart." he said, easily putting together why Will had taken them off.

"I suppose if you won't look at me like this then I can always give you a reason to." he said casually but Will understood that for the threat it was.

It would not take much for Dr. Lecter to cause trouble in this poorly secured cage and anything that happen would surely be on Will's shoulders being his current guard. Even more so when the security cameras showed he hadn't even been looking. Will did let his agitation show in the position of his shoulders before jerking his glasses back out and putting them on but still only looking at Dr. Lecter through his peripheral and not directly.

While it was better than nothing Will could still feel that bond grow just a little and new that it had grown enough for Hannibal, the more excepting one in their bond, to feel his emotions again. He chuckled in amusement at the sensation of Will's annoyance. Bubbly pleasure at experiencing something he never thought he'd have in his lifetime.

Though now that he at least got what he wanted in making Will at least look at him he wasn't inclined to make him feel like that again. He'd much rather tempt pleasure out of that bond.

"I don't supposed you'd be willing to tell me your name?" He asked and gave a disappointed but not surprised sigh when Will refused to answer him.

One could hope that his soul mate would be more inclined to overlook his dietary preferences but he'd expected he wouldn't; given he hadn't sought Hannibal out any time over the last week after meeting one another's eyes.

Hannibal simply continued talking as if they were having a conversation all the while Will did his best to tune the man out mentally. If their bond could form words, it would be screaming childishly: I can't hear you!

"I have not seen many soulmate marks in my life so I may not be the greatest expert on the topic but... I do believe our mark is truly significant." He said and Will hated how much he had to agree with the statement.

It was beautiful.

The sound of foot steps could be heard and Will let out a sigh of relief as he saw his replacement coming. Hannibal hummed dissatisfied with the short time they had together.

“Another time then, Mylimasis.” He said in defeat and with a layer of sadness that actually panged Will’s heart for a second before he pushed down his sympathy.

“Shift change.” the new guard said and Will nodded at him a goodbye before leaving. Never once looking back at his soulmate, who was certainly watching him walk away.

Will gets a terrifying feeling that sensation will soon become familiar to him.

Chapter 4

It's been three days since Will's encounter with Dr. Lecter and he was hesitantly optimistic.

He could feel the bond settling down again already and had double checked that for the duration of the rest of the month he wouldn't have any more shifts with the man. Now that he knew what to look for Will knew Dr. Lecter would spot him coming a mile away. Will intended to never be within that mile of him.

Which is why you could understand his concern when Georgina told him Chilton wanted to see him in his office as soon as he clocked in. She didn't have a particular bad tone when she informed him but it certainly wasn't happy etiher. Will walked to that office with a level of tripidation he hasn't expereinced since he was a child.

Chilton was, as always behind his desk sitting on a chair with an air of false superiority. Will wondered if the man knew everyone else knew he lifted his chair up higher so that he'd always be a little bit above them when they sat down. It was painfully obvious to even the most novel psychologist or adjacent specialist.

"You wanted to see me?" Will asked as he came in.

"Will, yes, please have a seat." Chilton said and will did as asked. Tucking one foot behind the other under the desk subtle in a nervous shift.

"You spent time guarding Hannibal Lecter a few days ago?" he said with a tone of question but Will knew it was more a statement of fact then anything else. He nodded his head in confirmation anyways. His heart pounding fast but his face remaining impartial and unbothered. He was terrifyed that Dr. Lecter may have foudn it in his best interest to reveal their connection to each other. Horrible thoughts of what that could mean for Will were rising to thr surphase.

"Yes, was there a problem with my performance?" Will asked shifting the conversation to any other potential mistake he could have made.

"Relax Will, you aren't in any kind of trouble." Chilton said calmly. This smug look on his face showing how much pleasure he took in his employees discomfort. Must give him some sort of narcissistic pleasure to unnerve people; Will couldn't help but note. The attitude certainly help Will relax though. He doesn't think this is how Chilton would be behaving if He knew the truth.

"I have good news for you." Chilton said with a smile, finally putting Will out of his anxious misery. Will felt himself visibly relax. He didn't even notice how tense he was until his shoulders stopped tensing. He waited patiently and silently for Chilton to continue.

"Will you... You are the only person I have ever assigned to guard Hannibal Lecter and didn't get some form of complaint from later." he said allowing his obvious impressed tone go

through. Will didn’t know how to respond to that so he remained quiet and let Chilton keep going.

“I’ll be frank Will. It is hard to find people like us.” He said gesturing between the two of them and Will resisted raising a brow.

“People who can handle the overwhelming presence of a man like Hannibal.” he said leaning back again in his chair.

“I struggle to find full-time personal that can handle the job of guarding him. So-”

Will was already dreading where he knew this was going.

“-I would like to promote you to a permanent shift watching him. Not all day of course. Who could handle that? Just two or three days a week for a three to six hour shift depending on the day and available staff. You’ll still be doing your old job mostly but it comes with ten thousand more annually and significantly better benefits, health care of course being one.” Chilton said in what must have been meant to be a joking way. When Will didn’t react he just cleared his throat and got back on topic.

“...I don't’ think I’m qualified sir. I’ve only been an orderly a couple of weeks.” Will said reasonably. Hoping to humble his way out of this situation. A regular shift on Dr. Lecter’s watch was the last thing he wanted.

“Nonsense! No need to be like that Will, I more then most am very familiar with your career background. You are more then qualified for this, as proven by your work performance so far. Don’t be nervous about what the others will say about the new guy getting promoted so fast. Why they even might pity you.” Chilton said with a small chuckle. As if the idea was funny people like them would dread a position like this.

Will was stuck. For all his planning and pre-thought, he never considered this a concern and he didn’t have the social skills necessary to get out of something like this. He didn’t know what to do and even worse.... there was a part of him that was actually happy at the thought of more time with his soulmate even if it was spent in tense one-sided conversation. With a regretful sigh Will finally replied.

“...Thank you.” he said bitterly and didn't’ know if Chilton chose to ignore the attitude or genuinely didn’t notice it.

“Excellent! I’ll have a new schedule drawn up soon and talk to your supervisor for you. She’ll inform you of the changes that will be made at a later time. You can go back to work now.” he finished, quickly dismissing Will, who got up with dragging feet and a heavy sigh one the mans office door was closed.

Okay... new plan then.

Chapter 5

Will sighed again as he tried turning his key one more time.

His car seemed just as reluctant as him to go into work today. While Will was actually trying to get it to start and get there in time, a huge part of him was hoping he'd never get it to work so he call in for the day or something. After all it was the first day of his regular shift with Hannibal starting.

Will let go of the wheel and leaned back head facing the ceiling as he took a moment to come to terms with that thought. He wondered how other's who'd been in similar situations as his have handled this before.

It was an silently acknowledged reality that the degenerates of society had soulmates that didn't always match their inclination towards crime. Many of those people got arrested before they even found their soulmates, doomed to never meet them if their prison sentence was too long. For those who had a soulmate before getting arrested many found themselves still visited and, in their country, a legal right to visits with their soulmates conjugal or otherwise. There was even some states that would allow for soulmates who were both in jail to share cells.

For majority of the people in jail who had a soulmate already they were typically disowned by them. No one wanted the stigma of having someone so horrible attached to them on such a mental, emotional, physical, and even spiritual level. Begs to the question to those around them if they could even be trusted.

Most prisoners understood this as well and made a conscious decision to let them go for the sake of their free soulmates life in the world. Will wondered if maintaining that was much easier than what he was doing? If both soulmates decided to ignore the bond, would the pull towards it be lessened? Would it make this easier?

Maybe it was so hard for him because of the strength his bond seemed to have, even at it's weakest level. His mark certainly proved how strong it was. Could something like that even be tempered?

Will doesn't know for sure but he's determined to try. So with another sigh of frustration and determination Will sat up and tried his key again. Not knowing if he was satisfied or disappointed when the car came on.

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For once Will was glad to see Matthew that morning. His common insistence they have a full conversation every time they see each other ensured Will was able to stall for even more

time.

“Morning, Pumpkin.” He said with a groggy tone. Will was surprised he was able to even bother with the chirper words even though he so clearly was not a morning person.

“Morning.” Will said calmly, drinking his coffee to wake up a bit more as well before his break ended. Matthew looked at it jealously. Will couldn’t tell if he was jealous Will had coffee and he didn’t or jealous of the cup getting to make contact with his lips when he couldn’t. If Matthew wasn’t so obviously narcotic Will may have found his insistent crush concerning, but Matthew wore his crazy on his sleeve which made him wonderfully predictable and harmless.

“Can I have that?” He asked Will with a pleading eyes and pointing at the coffee. Too tired to make his own and desperate for an indirect kiss. Will just handed it over, it was half done and luke-warm anyways. Matthew took it with great joy.

“Thank you, Honey. Your too good to me.” He said and placed his lips almost exactly where Will’s had been.

Creep.

“How’s your day been so far?” Matthew asked casually. Will shrugged absently, still not used to small talk.

“Car trouble. May have to bring it to the shop at some point.” Will said with an honest bothered tone. Matthew looked at him shocked he’d even responded at all but seemed very happy with the fact Will chose to acknowledge him for once.

“Well, if you do, you can count on me to give you a ride to work until you get it back.” He said and Will raised a playfully disbelieving eyebrow at him.

“And I’m supposed to believe you’ll get up the extra hour to come get me?” Will said and Matthew almost chocked on the coffee from his soft laugh.

“For you Sweetheart, anything.”

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Will walked the daunting hall with even more discomfort then the first.

At least then he had hope not to be noticed last time. Now he knew there was no way Dr. Lecter wouldn’t notice him. He hadn’t even made it down the hall yet and he could feel their neglected bond, pulsing ever so slightly with their growing proximity. He was certain Lecter could feel it just as much if not more than him.

He was unsurprised to see the man peaking over his book and locking eyes with him as he walked towards the table where the current guard was waiting. A pleased smile growing on his face. He said nothing thought when Will first walked up and relieved the current guard. Not until he was well out of ear shot.

“There’s that terrible aftershave I love. Good morning, Mylimasis.” He said, likely trying to get a rise out of Will. Any type of acknowledgement, if even just annoyance.

Jokes on him this was a gift and not in fact Will’s bad taste.

“How have you been since last we saw each other?” He asked, with the expectation for Will to ignore him.

Will simply plopped hard down on the chair and turned his head up towards the ceiling, putting his cap over his eyes as if to nap. With anyone else such a rude gesture would have spark true rage in Hannibal but with his soulmate all he could think was: adorable.

“Alright then, I tell you about my time.” He said instead and Will was struggling to pretend to not listen while at the same time his instincts demanded he indulge his soulmate. Traitorous mind as always.

“It was truly dreadful without you.” He said honestly but with a composure one did not expect from someone locked in a place like this.

“I use to be a psychiatrist at one point and soulmate separation anxiety was often something I help my patients deal with. I thought that I had an inkling as to what they may be experiencing but I see now I was never going to be able to comprehend such a feeling as this.” He said and while Will did his best not to change his demeanor outwardly he was sure Dr. Lecter felt the longing that flashed through the bond before Will could stop it. Having experienced the same level of separation anxiety as him.

He hated how much better he felt right now in his presences. Dr. Lecter continued talking.

“During our bi-weekly interview Dr. Chilton let slip I would be getting some more permanent and regular guards… I don’t suppose you’ll be among them.” He said and Will just readjusted in the chair but Will guesses that action was enough for Dr. Lecter to take as a yes.

“It may be too much to hope that you requested this position yourself but I’m choosing to believe it.” He said with that same light tone. There was a lull of silence between them that was weird comfortable. Will thought for a moment he may actually fall asleep in this comfortable position, his separation anxiety soothed by Dr. Lecter being right next to him. Will knew that if he did, it would be one of the better sleeps he’s had in a while.

“Are you willing to tell me your name today?” Dr. Lecter asked suddenly, waking Will from his daze almost sleep. Will was sure not to respond as always.

“I thought not. That’s fine.” Dr. Lecter said and Will heard the sound of him coming over to the bars. Will finally moved the hat from his face and kept the man in eye sight without

looking directly at him. He wasn't dumb enough to let his guard down around a known murder.

"I've been thinking of what your name could be since last we saw each other. Perhaps you could humor me with allowing me to try and guess it?" Dr. Lecter said once again. Comfortably leaning a hip against the bars so he could see Will as clearly as possible. His face softening unconsciously as he took in every line of his face and did his best to imagine what he might look like outside the full bodied orderly uniform.

What caught his eye most was that beautifully dark gleam in the man's eyes. Not just a product of annoyance from Hannibal's unwanted presences but in innate darkness that Hannibal suspects has been there from a young age. Oh, how it drew him in.

"Anthony?" He threw out there and Will once again didn't even blink.

"Lucas?" He said and Will wondered in what way did he look like a Lucas?

"Richard?" He said and Will could now tell form the tone and name choice the man couldn't even be trying.

"Hmmm…. Hubert?" He said and Will unconsciously let out a humor snort and a rush of amusement passed through their bond.

Will was aghast at himself for reacting to outwardly. He put a hand over his mouth and nose and turned his body away from Hannibal fully.

Hannibal, while he obviously wasn't going to be able to guess Will's name, was beyond pleased to have made him smile and almost laugh. The feel of his amusement was practically euphoric. A sensation that Hannibal could only imagine the first time he'd tried human meat coming close to feeling like.

"Not that one, then." He said softly and moved back over to his bed. Letting his ashamed soulmate sulk turned away from him for the rest of their time together. Content with enjoying the lingering affects of that joy passing through their bond and memorizing every part of Will he could see.

Will was beyond relieved for his shift to end that day.

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Will sighed as he got out the shower and dried his hair, a couple of his dogs running up to him as he walked out and to the living room. His preferred place of rest with his dogs all present in their own beds. The living room allowing for a size accommodation for this sleeping arrangement his small bedroom could not.

He sat down on his bed and leaned down to scratch Zoe behind the ear. His sweet girl running up to him for attention. Will was glad to indulge her. It helped his keep his mind off things. His eyes were drawn to his marking on his body as he did. He noticed the tip of one of the leaves of the flower was now on his elbow.

Will looked down at himself quickly, afraid the thing had grown in size from the last time. Only to find that it hadn't grown but rather moved. He didn't see it at first but after staring for a while he could. A slow swaying movement as if it was blowing in the wind. Making it rise and lower ever so slightly on his body. Will shuddered at the sight of it. Concerned about what it could mean for his and Hannibal's relationship.

After a while of staring he couldn't handle it anymore and pulled the covers quickly over himself as to better ignore it. Practically throwing himself to the bed and forcing his eyes closed. Determined to fall asleep as fast as possible and to such out any attempts Dr. Lecter might make to share dreams with him.

He just barely managed to get to sleep like that. The fear of the future running around in his head for the duration of the night.

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Deep in a mental institution for the Criminally insane Hannibal was looking at his own similarly moving mark. Touching it ever so lightly with a look of pure joy on his face.

"You'll open up to me soon enough, Mylimasis."

Chapter 6

Will needed a day off.

He decided that as soon as he'd woken up the next morning after his shift with Dr. Lecter. He was fine to take it too. His shifts with Dr. Lecter only being Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and the weekend were his best days to take off.

While he would love to get out of seeing the man and taking a day off on his actual shifts he knew it would draw too much attention and agitate his soulmate. Which while Will wouldn't be bothered by that he got the feeling Hannibal would certainly take that pent up frustration out on his replacements. No need to make anyone else pay for his bad luck.

Still though, Will needed this day off. Besides, he was short in almost everything in his home now. Being someone with who lived in the middle of nowhere with seven other canine mouths to feed Will often bought everything in bulk and it was about time for his monthly grocery and necessity trip to the store.

So, after ensuring his dogs got a good morning workout and ate, Will started getting his car completely empty and ready to hold all the bags he was likely to be haling back. Once he was all ready to go, he went to grabbed the premade list he had that was always perfect for these monthly trips. It also helped to ensure he didn't have to talk to as many people as possible while shopping. Will dreaded ever needing to

Once he was ready he got into his car and prayed to a nonexistent God for it to work. He turned the key a couple of times and sighed when it struggled. He tried one more time and held it as the car seemed to do it's best. He groaned and let his head fall onto the wheel. Perking up when the engine started just as he did. Will let out a sound of relief and began pulling out of his drive way.

"Okay, now let's hope you can get me home too."

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Will moved on autopilot as he shopped.

Only having eyes for the things on the shelves he needed and his list. Expertly evading or being evaded by other shoppers as he went. Avoiding any close proximity or touching. It was his day off and he was enjoying an absences of touch he hasn't experienced since meeting Matthew. It was a wonderful breather. If the man wasn't such a good stupid fucking friend otherwise Will would have cut him off long ago for making such peaceful days a rarity.

Will found himself stuck on the last item on his list. Having to actively search and look for it. Concentrating so entirely on the shelves he hadn't noticed he was about to bump into someone until he already had. Making her drop her much smaller arm cart in the process.

"Oh, I'm so sorry." he said leaning down to help her pick it all up.

"It's alright. No harm done." She responded and they picked up the stuff in silence, that is until she looked up at his face and her hands froze as she stared at him curiously for a second.

"You wouldn't happen to be Will Graham?" She asked and Will looked up at her for the first time, finding her features familiar. He tried to place it but was falling short on a name or where he may have met her.

"It's Alana, Alana Bloom?" She said hoping to jog his memory, so she didn't seem like some creep who knew him despite him not knowing her. She was just good at faces and names after all not a stalker. Will perked up at the name.

"Grad level research and method class." Will said remembering where he knew her from, she smiled at him.

"Yeah." She said happily." It had been a small but interesting class, so it wasn't so outrageous to remember someone from it, but Will was still impressed she was able to pick him out so easily.

"Oh well... It's good to see you again." he said awkwardly, doing his best to act how anyone else would at a moment like this. Alana smiled fondly at him. Remembering clearly how endearingly awkward the man was from back in class. It gave her such a wave of nostalgia. Will handed her the final box of cereal she had on the ground directly. Alana took it and was sure to back up and not touch his hand. Remembering his discomfort with that. Will was thankful for the consideration.

As she took it Will noticed a soul mark that hadn't been there last he knew her trailing from her middle finger where it entwined and circled around her arm and to her elbow. Will didn't know if it went further than that as her clothing hid the rest. He was curious to know what shape it took pass that. He must have been staring too because she looked down and noticed it herself.

"Oh! Yeah, i found my soulmate." She said casually and Will nodded at the information.

"Congratulations." he said blandly but he meant it. She seemed happy about it and Will could feel good for people who's pairing actually worked out unlike his own.

"Do you have anyone?" She asked and Will noticed how she distinctly didn't say soulmate but meant anyone in general. There were others like him after all who did not seek out their soulmates or were dating others to avoid loneliness while waiting to meet them. Will shook his head.

"No, I'm single." He said and they just kind of stood there for a second as Alana waited for him to go on. When he didn't she spoke up again.

“You know it’s been a while since we’ve seen each other. I didn’t know you lived and worked near. We should exchange numbers. It’s good to have references in the area you know personally.” She said kindly. It was important to have local collogues contact information after all.

“O, I’m not a therapist.” He said and she looked a little confused but interested.

“What did you do with your degree then?” She asked before she caught herself. That was kind of a rude question as everyone couldn’t cut it in the field and ultimately their degree became useless but you will had been such a young genius in school she thought for sure he’d be fine.

“I was a cop profiler for a while, a professor as well, but now I’m an orderly.” he said and she nodded. That lined up in their field and she remembered now that crime was always Will’s specialization.

“Well, I occasionally consult with the FBI and I would love to have you as a reference for difficult cases. If your anything from what I remember in school I’m sure your an excellent profiler.” She said, already planning to look up Will records with the cops. She would later be even more impressed with his perfect arrest rate. It’s a shame an injury was what potentially led him to quitting. A real loss for the department he was apart of.

“...Okay.” Will said, not sure how he felt about that yet but he could always turn her down later or reject her call should it ever come up and he change his mind.

“Great! Hey, maybe we could even hang out sometime. My wife would love to meet and old classmate of mine. I must brag our cook is also excellent.” She said and Will could easily guess she married into money. He shrugged giving no positive or negative to socializing. He wanted to put himself out there more but honestly Matthew was enough for now. He doesn’t think he can bare more friends then that at the moment.

They exchanged numbers and just as awkwardly as before went their separate ways back to shopping. Will finished up soon after and noticed that Alana was actually in a line a couple of lanes away from him. He couldn’t help but notice her now. Always hyper focusing on things he’d recently interacted with. He tried to pretend not to notice her though. He didn’t want to make her uncomfortable with unintentional staring.

It was only when Will was in his car and the engine literally exploded when he tried to turn it on did he notice her again. It wasn’t exactly a large grocerys tore so Alana easily noticed him when he was in the parking lot and having trouble.

“A-are you okay?” She asked nervously looking at the car’s slightly open hood that was smopking slightly and will frustraingly restin ghis head on the wheel again. Will just shrugged at her. The gesture quickly becoming his default move when he just didn’t have it in him to interact with others.

“I know we just re-met but... do you need a ride?” She offered with a sympathetic tone. Will looked up and took in the look in her eyes. It reminded him how she was back in their school days. That same look of underline pity. Rather she realized it or not she always had a

tendency to think of Will as less capable then the average adult. Not necessarily infantizing but definately seeing him as kid-like.

He remebered now why he made a point to not keep in touch and even forget her. It use to annoy him so much in his younger years but as an adult he just didn't have it in him to care. Better to just take advantage of that attitude. Was that a messed up thing to think? Will didn't have it in him to figure that out either. Fuck taming his darker more manipulative side today. He needed to get home.

He nodded at Alana with a deep sigh.

"If you wouldn't mind." he said calmly. She gave him another sweet and sympathy filled smile.

She helped him transfer his many bags to her car and waited with him for the tow truck to come to take it to nearest car place. Calling them in advance and saying he'd leave it there for an over night acessment. He made a mental note to call Matthew. He'd have to cash in on that promise to drive him to work.

Alana drove him all the way home and even helped him to get his bags to the door. Will had thanked her multiple times by that point. He wasn't socially inept enough to not realize how much she was going the extra mile to help him. He offered to pay for her gas or something but she said getting to meet his dogs was payment enough.

Since she wouldn't take that as thanks will offered her too at least have some lunch with him since it had gotten so late. She had accepted and Will figured enduring some more social interaction was the least he could do. He was pleasantly surprised halfway through cooking some fish for them Alana was actually a great conversation partner. He found he didn't mind hanging out with her much. In some ways it was even easier then delaing with Matthew, who he found tolerable. Some how they got on the topic of her soulmate again.

"-Some would consider it unethical to marry their former patient but I think I have a pretty good excuse for marry my Margot." She said humorously rolling her sleeve up more to take a look fondly at her mark.

She explained to Will that it made an entire trail from where it wrapped around her finger to upper part of her breast where it formed into a small heart pattern. Interestingly enough not the character of a heart but a true anatomical heart model. She said when she and Margot held hands, it was like their hearts were visibly connecting.

"It's so perfectly positioned, sometimes, the beat of my actual heart will make it look as if it's moving and beating itself." She said with a loving smile at the mark of a perfect replica of her heart.

"But it doesn't actually move right?" Will asked curiously. Latching onto a insight into his own mark.

"Oh God no. That would either mean an incredible unstable bonding or a very *intense* relationship. Like, Romeo and Juliet die together intense. I've only ever heard of one or two

people who had something that significant before." She said jokingly put meaningfully.

Will turned around with the excuse of plating their food to hide the way his eyes widened at the words. He was tempted to scratch at his own still moving mark.

"Well, if you ever have heart troubles your doctor won't have to cut you open to examine it." Will said, trying to change the subject again. Alana gave a chuckle at the joke.

"Soulmate marks come with many benefits." She said softly and reached out for the plate of salmon Will gave to her. Their hands accidentally knocking her glass of wine over and splashing on Will, who couldn't help but jerk at that.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" Alana said guilty tone in her voice. Will waved her off.

"It was both our faults." he said and held the shirt as he looked down at it. He didn't say anything as he stared at the shirt and started to walk off. Alan figured to change his shirt. She sat patiently and stared at the mess, listening as Will went over to a room she suspected was for laundry and left the door open as he changed.

Alana noticed the wine was still dripping to the floor. She got up quickly and looked for something to clean with. When she couldn't find anything she started heading back to where Will was.

"Hey Will, where do you keep your dish towels... wow." She said suddenly. Making Will look up at the doorway. His shirt hanging over his head and revealing his huge soulmate mark on his body.

Her eyes were wide at the sight of such a large and complicated mark. Will pushed his new clean shirt back down quickly to hide it. He cleared his throat and shuffled his feet uncomfortably. Remembering her manners Alana looked away and headed back to dinning room, pretending she'd seen nothing.

Will just kind of stood there in the room for a while and waited for his heart to settle again. He probably should have closed the door, but being used to having no one over he hadn't thought about it. He eventually just walked back into the kitchen, bring a towel to clean with him. Alana smiled at him and took it, cleaning herself, as if to apologize for intruding on something so private.

"…How much of it did you see?" Will asked, unable to help himself.

"Nothing. If that's what you want me to see." She said and smiled again and Will sighed but nodded.

"Thank you." He said and sat in his own chair when she was done. She just smiled understandingly again.

While earlier Will had told her he was single he never said he hadn't met his soulmate. Being in her profession she knew that not all soulmate stories were are happy as her own and wouldn't push for details. It wasn't her business, after all. Still, it didn't stop the

overwhelming curiosity she had at shut a distinct mark. She had to actively keep herself from analyzing it in her head.

“So… you were telling me about how you and Margot met.” Will said offering her to latch onto something else. She jumped at the opportunity.

“Yes, that’s right!” She continued her story and eventually began to relax in recounting the memory of meeting her beloved. Forgetting all about Will’s mark and what just happen. Her own relaxing rubbed off on Will and they were able to have a nice lunch together before she had to head off. A promise to do it again sometimes but with Will coming over to her place to meet her wife.

It had been such a pleasant rest of his day he managed to fall asleep without thinking about any of his troubles for once.

Chapter 7

It was only when Matthew had pulled up to his home to drive him to work for the sixth time in a row, that Will questioned if it was a good idea to give him his address. A delayed thought he really should have come to sooner, if it's wasn't for the lack of a car still since he was unsavable and Matthew's disarming personality.

He questioned this further when Matthew did not just wait in the car for him but instead got out of the drivers seat and waved almost manically at Will with a wide grin on his face. Even more alarming coming from Matthew who was *never* this chirper so early in the morning. Will just sighed and locked his door. Stuffing his hand sin his pockets and coming over to him.

"Morning, Lov-" Will held a hand up to cut him off before he could even finish the sentence.

"If I catch you in so much as a three-yard radius of my home when you have not informed me your coming, I will shoot you." Will said calmly and with a serious gleam in his eyes. Matthew just gave a disgustingly smitten noise between his grinning teeth.

"Ah, Willy, you make me feel so tingly when you talk like that." He said and Will just rolled his eyes walking over to the passenger side of the car.

"Three yards, Matthew." Will said again making rare eye contact with him before getting in the car.

"Yeah, yeah, I'll text you *before* stalking you." Matthew said in a way Will wasn't 100% sure was a joke or not. He decided not to think too hard about it.

He then spent a mostly silent ride to work.

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"How everything been going over in high security?" Georgina asked Will casually as they both loaded up the trolly for their food distribution. Checking in with his odd schedule split between her team and the high security one.

Will's first work shift was with his usual team in the regular hospital wing. He wouldn't have to go see Dr. Lecter until later in the day. Which actually didn't bother him all that much to think about anymore.

Its amazing how adaptable human beings can be to things once they get a routine. The predictability of it all really helped Will to deal with it. He only had to see then man three hours every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Endure listening to Dr. Lecter talk for a while

and try to get a rise out of him before going home or waiting in break room for Matthew's shift to over. Rinse, wash, repeat.

Dr. Lecter seemed to also be content with the way things were now. Will had worried at first the man would go about more drastic means to get his attention as he continued to ignore him but instead he seemed to content himself with Will's emotional responses through the bond. Treating them as if they had actually been verbal communication. A perfectly satisfying response to him. Will knew this because the man had told him so. Deciding it was pick your poison kinda moment Will had stopped forcing his emotions out of the bond unless it was about something he specifically didn't want Dr. Lecter to know. Which was rather rare actually.

The man no longer tried to figure out much about Will other then his name, trying to guess it at least once whenever he saw him. He instead took their time together talking about himself and analyzing Will's reactions to his words. Trying to make Will more comfortable with him before he tries anything else. Understanding Will was much like him in being weary of things he didn't understand and as a result shutting himself off from them. Yet another thing Dr. Lecter admitted and told him. Always weirdly an open book when it was just the two of them around.

"Not so bad, it's actually less work then being over here." Will said and Georgina chuckled.

"I can imagine. When you have patients on that level of security there's not much to do but bring them their daily necessities." She said and Will nodded. They descended into silence again for a second.

"So I here you and Brown became fast friends?" She said next and Will looked up at her with a blank face that was his version of confusion. Georgina had een around him enough to know what it meant. She looked amused herself.

"That loud mouth makes himself know all over this hospital not just his own team." She said and Will gave an unsurprised expression.

"It's good your making friends. I know your on the shy side Will but this can be tasking work and talking to people who are going through it too is necessary for you mental stability as an orderly. Work events might be too much for you now and I get that, they aren't for everyone, so I was a little worried about how you'd be doing so early on with this all. Knowing you and Brown are at least getting acquainted helps ease this old woman's worries." She said with motherly affection. Will gave her a soft expression back, his best version of a smile.

While he still mourned people seeing Matthew and He as friends he knew she was true about all of that and it was actually part of the reason why he'd allowed himself to become friends with the man, instead of truly shutting off from him.

"Yeah, he's a decent guy. Gives me rides to work while I work on getting a new car. I've had a lot of other… friends in the past who wouldn't do even that much." Will said, thanking of his younger years and all the people that liked to claim to be the departments genius students friend but hadn't so much as sought him out outside of class or called even once after graduation.

"…Don't tell Matthew I told you that." Will then said bitterly. He still refused to show anything that could be confused as interest to Matthew. That did get a laugh from Georgina, a knowing glint in her eyes.

"Your secret safe with me."

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"Edward?" Dr. Lecter said trying the three and final name he would in guessing Will's name for the day.

Will let the negative response to the name seep through the bond in answer to Dr. Lecter.

"Better luck next time then." He said calmly, leaning back on his chair that he'd moved over to front of the cage, closest to the side Will was next to. Firmly placed in his peripheral vision.

"Tell me Mylimasis, do you have dogs?" Dr. Lecter asked suddenly and Will couldn't help jerking his head to look at him, stopping himself just as he was about give Dr. Lecter full view of his face. Turning back and shutting his emotions off to the man.

He hated when he guessed something accurate about himself despite all Will did to hide parts of his own life. Hannibal knew it to, which is why he limited himself but he just couldn't help it in some of the more obvious cases, like this.

"I noticed sometimes your uniform has bits of hair on it. Too short and dark in color to be your lovely curly locks. Not to mention how many different colored strands there are sometimes. You should really invest in a lint roller My Love." He teased, sighing when Will still shut off his emotions from him. Only managing to get a flicker of annoyance from their bond.

It could be almost painful to feel himself be such out like that after getting so used to the sensation of shared emotions over time. He knew it must affect his soulmate to, to cut them off from each other, but the man could be so charmingly stubborn and petty at time. Hannibal often wished he'd open up more.

"You don't seem much like a cat person to me, so I assumed dog." Dr. Lecter finished explaining his reasoning for his guess. Taking Will's lack of response as a positive.

"There really is no need to be so upset, my Dear. I'm your soulmate, I'm bond to know *some* personal information about you." Dr. Lecter said with an annoying amount of sense. Will let him know it to by opening up their bond again so he could feel the full force of displeasure from Will at the statement.

It only served to make the man smile having their connection restored, as one-sided as it already was. Will still refusing to dive into any of Hannibal's feelings even though he had

always left them open to Will.

“I would love to see them some time. While not possible in person, a picture would be rather nice.” Dr. Lecter said and Will only response was a wave of confusion at the desire. Hannibal responded as he always did, as if the emotions were words on their own.

“I will always be interested in the things some one I love, loves. I do imagine you wouldn’t take care of the small creatures unless you did in fact love them?” Dr. Lecter asked and Will allowed the deep affection he felt for his dogs come through and Hannibal didn’t know rather to smile or frown. While the feeling was amazing, Dr. Lecter mourned never having experienced anything like it yet directed at himself. Oh, he strove for the day he could top that affection Will was currently feeling.

“You see? Who wouldn’t want to get to know about something that makes their soulmate feel such a way.” Dr. Lecter said leaning against the bars. Will was supposed to tell him not to do that but that would require using his voice and Will was unwilling to give that to Dr. Lecter. Besides the man knew the rules.

Instead he just turned toward him slowly and tapped the bars. Hannibal smiled at his obvious resistance to speaking in his presences but still cooperated. No need to get his Love in trouble after all. He leaned back against the much too close chair again. So tempted to lean forward again when he realized being that close to the bars allowed for an easier access to Will’s delightful smell. It had not gone unnoticed by Hannibal when his soulmate stopped using his old after shave in favor of something that allowed his natural smell to come out more.

How precious.

“Perhaps you will humor me some time? Bring some pictures of the dogs. You can even just write their names on the back of the pictures. You won’t have to say a word.” Hannibal said trying to tempt Will into it. Will’s lips pursed as he couldn’t help contemplating the idea.

He hated how easy it was for Dr. Lecter to find those holes in his armor. If there was one thing that could get Will to socialize it was his babies.

It was silent as Hannibal seemed to sense the indecision in him. The man simply smiled as he watched the side of Will’s face fondly, seeing this as a real chance to finally get his soulmate to open up. Hannibal was very disappointed to look up and see that their time was nearly over. He sighed sadly at the sight.

Time just moved so fast when you were having fun.

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Matthew and Will got off around the same time that day so Will just waited for him by his car.

A bit of nervous energy about him today. A response to the worries of Will today. Was he really starting to miss Hannibal Lecter when he left for the day? Dreading the following one where he didn't get to see him and anticipating the next when they got to be together again. A rush of shame over came him at the thought.

Nope, he refused to believe this. He refused to believe that Dr. Lecter had been succeeding in waring him down. Had managed to get Will to engage in conversation as silent as that engagement might be.

No, no, no. The man was just tricking him. Playing on his vulnerable side. Engaging with that lonely part of Will that didn't get enough social interaction he desperately craved yet reviled.

"Hey, Honey-bunch, you ready to get home?" Matthew asked pulling out his key as he walked over. A little late having taken longer than Will to change out their uniform.

As Will saw him he was struck with an impulsive idea.

"Let's get a drink." Will said, shocking even himself with the words. Moving hands stopped and the clanking of keys followed soon after as Matthew looked at him as if he suddenly grown a second head. He took a second to look around them as if to find the person Will was talking to. That is before looking back and pointing to himself with a hopeful smile.

"You talking to me or the voices in your head?" He teased, Will was unfazed. He was always unphased except when it came to Dr. Lecter.

Fuck, he's thinking about him again.

"Yeah, let's get a drink." He said again with more certainty this time. Tucking his hands self-consciously in his jacket pocket. Having never done this before.

"Why, Will Darling, are you asking me on a date." Matthew said with a wide smile and Will was already regretting this but unwilling to back down now, he just narrowed his eyes.

"No, just drinks. Like… like friends." Will said uncomfortable.

"Well, why didn't you just say so? I could always use a drink at the end of the day." Matthew said finally unlocking his car door and getting in, Will following his lead.

"Where to, sweet thang?" He asked starting the engine.

"Anywhere." Will answered, he didn't exactly know the area, or you know… went out ever.

"Dirty Dick's it is!" Matthew shouted excitedly pulling out. Will forced himself to relaxed as much as the man already was. Leaning his head right to watch out the window as they went. Letting the man's constant good mood rub off on him for once and smiling softly.

"Dirty Dick's it is." He said much more calmly.

A pleased smile was his only response.

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Hanging out with Matthew wasn't so bad after all.

Once the man had a whiskey in him and calmed down from at 120% energy to a healthy 76% after a long day of work he was not only barrable but a good conversation partner. Up to date on all the recent study in their field scientific journals, all the recent criminal cases that were currently on going and a host of other topics Will gravitated to over others. Will almost forgot the stupidly high standard Chilton had for his staff, especially for the high security team. He really should have realized Matthew was bound to have more to him than his usual bubbly and maniac nature.

Then again, Will couldn't fault him for that either. You had to have some screws loose enjoy their kind of work. Matthew was just missing different screws from him. It was quickly becoming less annoying with this more subdued version. Then again, It also helped that Will himself had a few drinks to loosen up.

Will laughed openly at another ridiculous theory of Matthews concerning the case of the Axeman if New Orleans. Really, the baker who found the first body? Nobody thought it was the baker.

"You know Babe, I thought I was never gonna crack that shell of yours." Matthew said not resisting wrapping an arm around him as he inclined to.

Still occasionally insurable, apparently. At least Will was finally, mostly, use to it so it wasn't as bad anymore. He wondered if one day he'd become immune to Matthew's annoying touch from pure exposure. Like getting over an allergy.

"Oh, yeah." Will said, giving him an annoyed look at the arm but not bothering to slap it away from once. He was in a good mood, so he'd be nice. Matthew definitely noticed and seemed pleased at that.

"Yeah, I don't know if you know it but you're a tight-ass, Sweetheart." He said as if delivering devastating news to Will. It brought an amused smile to his face.

"Yeah, I know." Will said shamelessly.

"You see but *that*… that is what makes it worth digging pass your hardness." Matthew said pointing at the small smile on Will face and that came paired so well with the twinkle of darkness in his eyes. It put a genuinely soft expression of Matthew's own face.

"You know, I like the idea of a being with my soulmate one day as much as the next guy but… Willy, you make a man reconsider all his previous beliefs." He said honestly and for the first time Will felt pity at the sight of that real affection in the man's eyes.

It was a foolish thing to develop feelings for anyone but your soulmate. A doomed romance even when it was reciprocated. Matthew's smart enough to understand that. Which is likely why he's never serious pursued Will as obvious as emotions were and as playful his flirting tended to be. He's never seriously asked Will out. Who wouldn't feel sympathy about that?

Will allowed himself to lean back against the bench they were on and into Matthew's arms more. A contemplative look on his face as he sighed and stared up at the ceiling for a second before turning to the man again. Their faces uncomfortably close for even someone without Will's social adversity. For once it didn't bother him too much.

"You're not so bad yourself Matthew." Will said honestly. If it wasn't such an impossibility in their lives Will could see their equally unique craziness messing well together. Perhaps in another life.

Matthew gave a genuinely soft smile at the words letting the side of his head rest against Will's as he gazed at his face fondly. To anyone else they must look like soulmates out on a date, conversing through their bond. Having an intimate moment. Will wonders if the bartender will come interrupt them soon for fear of them going right at the booth. Not an unheard of occurrence between drunk exhibitionist soulmates in bars.

The mental image that brought to Will's mind was surprisingly unrepulsive. He leaned back and looked at Matthew with blank but intense contemplation again.

"What?" Matthew asked curiously having their moment interrupted by Will's move.

Should he have sex with Matthew? It would certainly distract him from his soulmate for a while. And who knows, maybe the pleasure will be intense enough to pass through the bond, even at this distance and Dr. Lecter will get mad enough to ignore him for a bit.

"Is there something in my teeth?" Matthew asked, baring them for Will to see better and tell him. Will snort in amusement at the sight.

No, he wasn't that desperate…. Yet.

"Excuse me?" A voice said and the two of them looked up and to their right at the sound of a voice. Matthew backing away a little at the move making Will realize just how close he'd gotten.

The Asian woman who called out to them gave a small guilty look at interrupting what she assumed to be two soulmates.

"I'm sorry to intrude but… are you Will Graham?" She asked with a gleam in her eye that Will remembers from his more enthusiastic students, who'd been familiar with his case record before taking his class.

A fan. Great.

Matthew looked back and forth between them dramatically a growing curious smile on his face. Before Will had the chance to lie about who he was Matthew beat him to it.

“Why yes he is.” He said, interested.

Noisy bastard.

The woman lit up again. Even more seeing Matthew unbothered by her question. She leaned over to shake his hand.

“I’m Beverly Katz. I’ve read many of your cases profiles. The way you can take into account even things like nearby insects activity into a profile is just.. SO impressive.” She said, Will shaking her hand to be polite.

“Thank you.” Was all he said calmly. Matthew was grinning like a shark that had spotted a particularly delicious meal.

“Gorgeous, you never told me you were famous.” He said teasingly and all of a sudden his close proximity was annoying again. Will needed another drink to deal with this. He looked sadly at his almost empty cup, downing the available whiskey.

“I’m not.” He insisted.

“Oh, his profile and arrest record is perfect. A well-known name in police lab rat circles.” The woman said leaning nearer to Matthew, who leaned closer as well. Like two gossiping teenage girls

Beverly, seemingly unfazed by his clear bad attitude. Did rudeness just not affect people anymore? What’s with Will running into all these overly forgiving people.

“I’ll need to read those sometime.” Matthew teased jostling Will’s shoulder a bit.

Will huffed a sigh before turning to the woman.

“It was good meeting you Dr. Katz.“ Will the win the Dr. figuring she at least had a PHD if she worked for the police in the lab.

“Matthew, take me home.” Will said turning to him.

“Your no fun.” Matthew said but was already getting up. Planning to pay their tab so they could go. Having insisted early he’d cover it this time so Will had no choice but to go out with him again to return the favor next time.

“Sorry, if I ruined your evening.” Dr. Katz said, having the decency to give an apologetic smile.

“You didn’t. I was planning to leave soon anyways. You just gave me an excuse.” He said, meaning it. The air between him and Matthew had been getting to intense.

“Well then I take back the apology. Glad I could help. You’re welcome.” She said with a small smirk Will could help giving a humored smile to.

“Tab’s paid, let’s go Pumpkin.” Matthew said and Will nodded grabbing his jacket.

“It was good to meet you.” Dr. Katz said with a smile and one more handshake offered. Will took it and returned the sentiment. Matthew doing the same.

Beverly watched, what she believed to be, the two soulmates walking out the bar together. Matthew’s hand shamelessly in Will’s back pocket.

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“Gonna invite me in for a night cap, Love?” Matthew asked as they pulled up to Will’s place.

“Night over, Matthew.” Will said simply, rolling his eyes at the dramatic pout Matthew gave.

“Your no fun, Willy.” He said and Will just gave him another look before sliding out. Walking around to the other side of the car to lean near the open driver window.

“Good night, Matthew.” He said and Matthew got a daring look on his face before leaning over to peck him on the cheek. Moving back quickly before Will’s hand could then make contact with that mouth in a hard smack.

He just cackled as he raised the window too high for Will to try again.

“Good night, Beautiful!” He screamed through the crack of the window driving off. Will just sighed again.

Was that really the best he could do in a friend?

Chapter 8

The next couple of days Will disappointingly found himself taking pictures of his dogs.

Not just digital ones to sit in his phone either. He's talking digging out his old camera and printer for quality images. Then taking out the blank paged book he found in the same book as the other two item to neatly give each image it's own page. Then adding their name at the top so he wouldn't have to use his voice to say them.

Feeling like the blank space that filled the rest of the page was too bare, he then filled that space with cute tid-bit about their personality, adorable anecdotes, and the likes and dislikes of each dog. Even including the full story of how he got each one. Tapping and gluing bits of their soft fur chunks or broken pieces off their favorite toy to the pages as well with notes scribble next to them of what they were. Smiling at the complete product when it was finished before frowning when he realized what he'd done.

Will made a fuck scrap book.

He huffed at himself before going to throw the book down on the near by bed. His hand stopping him from damaging his hard work and lowering it to the bed instead. No need to waste good time he spent on it by breaking anything. It's not like he had to actually show it to Hannibal Lecter. He could change his mind any time.

At least that's what Will told himself as he packeted the book into his work bag.

Chapter 9

“So, did you see anything you’d like?” The car salesman asked looking over the lot of sued cars with Will. Will looked around unimpressed with he selection and outrageous prices he saw.

He’d come here because it was the closest place to his home and he was unwilling to pay a taxi to take him any further. Matthew having been too busy to drive him today despite how much more time they spent together now-a-days.

Their night out for drinks having been a bit of a break through for their relationship, both finding a perfect balance of give and take in the relationship to finally call each other real friends. Well almost, Matthew still refused to give up the flirting. Will was becoming immune to it.

He was pulled from his thoughts by the salesmen expectant face. Maybe he should have looked into the reviews of the place first before coming. If only to save himself the money on the drive. Even with ten thousand more annually from his promotions these cars just weren’t worth it.

“I think I’m just in the market for something different.” Will said politely and the man gave a disappointed look but didn’t look surprised.

“Well, hey, if you change your mind give me a call. I’m sure we can come up with a good deal for that Honda you were eyeing.” He said and Will took the man’s offered business card with no intention of calling. He paid him a good evening and started walking from the place.

He’d spent a fair amount of money to get to the city after all. If he wasn’t driving off with a car he was going to at least find something to make the trip worth it.

Will just kind of walked around for a while. Mostly enjoying the peace of exploring unfamiliar surroundings by himself and the nice weather they were having. He eventually found his eyes being drawn to the local library. When was the last time he’d used his card for this place? Will decided to go ahead and take a look in. He could waste sometime on their computers researching.

Unsurprisingly he had to renew the card, given how old it was so his identification number on it actually worked to open the computer. He thanked the worker for their help as he sat down at the computer. Going to the search engine and typing in Dr. Hannibal Lecter.

May seem like an odd choice to look up the soulmate he was often trying to forget but this was actually something Will did often. When he found himself getting any inking of positive emotions for the man a couple hours renewing the information of his case and horrific murders was enough to remind him why pursuing that particular boa was not a great idea.

He didn’t exactly feel the need to do that now but looking the man up when he had free time had just become habit at this point. Will would deny most of the other times he did it was on

his off days when he was missing the man.

So, without thinking much about it, he once again went into a deep dive into the man that was Hannibal Lecter. Disgusted as usual at every thing he saw. Almost numb to it at this point after seeing and reading it all so many time. He kept going though and in doing so found something new for once.

Typically that wouldn't surprise him, there as a lot on Hannibal Lecter in the world being the sensation he caused in so many fields when he was arrested. He had however, never found anything positive on the man before. Every thing about him before his was arrested buried deep under articles, news, blogs, and magazines of his darker nature.

He had no idea Hannibal had previously been such a well-known name in the art field. Thet he was known for his love of opera, art skills, talent as a surgeon and later a psychiatrist, sculpting, music, cooking. You name it and the man had so much to show in skill.

Will had always gotten a bit of a posh air from him, thinking it was just a result of the country he came from but he could see now where it came from. Will was fascinated by this new side he was discovering that Hannibal had only ever hinted at.

He found himself diving deeper and deeper into every bit of detail he could find on the man's life separate from his crimes. And like that hours passed while Will did research in that library. Only stopping when he finally saw the time and that it was bound to be well into the night by now. He felt a sudden rush of shame at his behavior.

Here he was again, entertaining these unacceptable feelings. Indulging in the idea that his soulmate might be more than a monster in a cage. Reading this stuff as if it meant anything different from the relationship they do, and must, have. Will pulled himself away from the computer and just stared at the floor contemplating how to get back from this. Deciding his best hope was to go home and pretend it never happen. As he always did when it came to anything positive involving Hannibal Lecter.

He was further ashamed at himself that he left only after printing out photo's of Dr. Lecter before his arrest.

Chapter 10

It was well into his shift before Will worked up the nerve to finally lift up his bag from his chair and place it onto the table.

Hannibal who had been content to sit near the bars again and just enjoy the sight and smell of his soulmate in silence was surprised to see any change from him. Will was so very good at ignoring Hannibal by this point that at times he was moment away from falling asleep in his chair from boredom. Today though, Hannibal could feel an unusual discomfort from him and watched, fascinated, as he squired in his chair for over an hour.

Unknowing if it was because of him or something else going on in his day. Hannibal had been so very tempted to ask him what the problem was but Will had been so anxious, Hannibal suspected if he didn't ask and didn't try to guess for himself for once the man might even talk to him. At the very least to get whatever it was off his chest. A little disappointing that plan didn't work out but ever so curious to see what he was doing now the disappointment didn't last long.

He watched as his soulmate pulled out a dark navy blue book with not title or cover on it. Holding the book for a second before sighing and turning to Hannibal, offering it to him through the bars. Amazing for so many reasons.

One being the very fact his soulmate had acknowledged him so directly at all but on top of that to not follow the rules and hand him anything through the bars and not his delivery tray was wonderful. It spoke to some level of trust between them. Trust enough that his soulmate did not believe he was hurt him. It made Hannibal smile and practically buzz with love and warm feelings as he reached for the book.

Even more interesting when his soulmate did not look away right after he took it but instead watched him as he inspected it. Hannibal couldn't help but to tease the man by slowly going ove the empty cover and back first. Running his finger all over it and turning it around and about as if he didn't know which way was up.

He smirked at the glare his soulmate sent him and the wave of impatient annoyance he got, not just coming from Will but pushed his way harder than usual. A conscious decision to ensure he felt it. Hannibal just chuckled. Enjoying his soulmate wanting his attention for once instead of it being the other way around.

He decided to put him out of his misery and finally opened the book to the first page. A picture of a dog was the first then that caught his attention. Hannibal's eyes blinked rapidly for a second and his smirk grew into a real smile as he realized what he was looking at.

His soulmate had made him a book of his dogs. While Hannibal couldn't help the bit of hilarity he felt at the sight of the small paragraphs all through the page, and likely other pages, and at the thought of how far his soulmate would go not to talk to him, he saw this for something even more positive than it already was.

He was finally starting to open up to him a little.

“He’s adorable.” Hannibal finally said and he meant it.

He was as capable as anyone else to find dogs cute. The rush of pure fondness Hannibal got forced him to look up from the book he’d been reading out loud suddenly. He saw Will wasn’t even looking at him anymore but had turned in his chair full and was leaning against the bar so he could look down at the book as well. A small grin on his face at the sight of his pup. Still not looking at Hannibal directly he reached through the bars, so trusting, and flicked the pages.

Hannibal took it as a sign to keep turning. Taking a moment to count up how many dogs their were before taking a deeper look at them.

“Seven dogs. Looks like I’m not the only one that comes with a little compromise.” Hannibal joked and Will rolled his eyes. His pleasant feelings hadn’t changed though and Hannibal could tell he enjoyed the joke. Hannibal was glad for once it didn’t come with any underlining shame that usually came with any happiness Hannibal triggered in his soulmate.

To feel him to unabashedly happy about something Hannibal did or said was a breath of fresh air.

“This one here, I can’t tell what breed that it?” Hannibal said pointing at one of the dogs and hoping his Love would speak for once to answer him, caught up in the moment. Instead, he reached over and pointed at some text just below the picture itself that gave the dogs breed. Hannibal snorted at the preparedness. Looking at his soulmate to show his humor. Will facial expression and feelings conveying a simple message:

You didn’t think it would be that easy, did you?

They said, and Hannibal smile bore teeth for once and not just his polite grin. No, he hadn’t thought it would be so easy. They went back to reading the book together. Hannibal speaking out loud so Will could now just where he was on the page. Will having got so comfortable he was leaning his face against the bars and his hand hung through casually. Pointing at specific notes and words he wanted to make sure Hannibal saw. Hannibal was so very tempted to try and hold or touch that hand but knew all that would serve to do is make his soulmate pull it back out of his reach. So, instead he just enjoyed the proximity.

As they sat there gazing at the scrapbook together. Hannibal giving his commentary on everything he read and saw of his dogs Will felt a pleasant warmness in his chest. Not realizing in his moment of vulnerability he’d allowed a sliver of their bond to open. Their shared contentness mingling and tangling with one another until it just felt like one shared emotion. Unable to distinguish who even felt it first. It was so pleasant Will couldn’t bring himself to close it immediately. Instead, he looked up from the book slightly and met Hannibal eyes that had been staring at his calm face, a soft smile on his own and a softness to his eyes. Will’s breath hitched at the sight. He looked back down at the book before the feeling could overwhelm him.

For a moment, he thought that this wasn't so bad. That it wasn't so hard to see the rest of his life playing out like this. This was enough for him to be content with their relationship, he thinks, from the feelings he was getting from Hannibal that it might be enough for him to. So long as neither of them truly crosses these bars. Certainly they could never have a life together if one of them did but… they could have *something* along the borders of the cage.

Will looked up from the book with Hannibal as the sound of footsteps could be distantly heard coming their way. With a move faster than even Hannibal was ready for his soulmate reached through the bars and snagged the scrap book back. Quickly closing and packing it away in his bag. Their bond shutting close practically the moment the book closed. Hannibal's hand still in place from how it was holding the book.

An amused expression on his face now as he watched his soulmate turn away from him in a pathetic position he typically was. Even more of a show now than usual as Hannibal was certain they'd just had a moment together. He chuckled softly but did not complain at having the book taken back or being ignored again.

Will was glad he was looking away from the man as his blushing face would have been impossible to hide.

"Have a nice day, Darling." Was all Hannibal said as he moved his chair back away from the bars again and sat on his cot, opening a book and pretending he'd been reading for a while. Knowing Will would not acknowledge his presence in any way so long as others were around.

"My Love! I've come to take you home!~" Matthew screamed down the hall at him.

Will couldn't stop the snort of amused fondness at his friend when he saw the rose in the man's hand. Likely stolen from Barbra's gift basket in the break room, sent to her by her most recent boyfriend. Of course, Matthew could help himself but to take one.

Will was standing ready to go by the time Matthew and his replacement got to him. He nodded in thanks to the man and reflexively took the flower as it was given to him. Not even noticing as Matthew placed his right hand on his shoulder before moving it down to his arm, then hip, then squarely in his back pocket as he always did when they walked out together for the day.

Hannibal certainly noticed though. If Will had allowed any emotions through their bond in that moment he would have thought twice about letting Matthew touch him so casually in the man's sight line.

"How was your day, Honey?" Matthew started up conversation as they began to walk down the hall. Will simply shrugged. The start of Matthew's response being the last thing that could be heard before they were out of ear shot of the cage.

"You know your real quiet today, Babe. Hey, we should stop at that new Indian place on our way ho-"

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Hannibal stared up at the dark ceiling above him.

It was lights out and most of the hall was dark as well as his cell. A single low light lamp on by the guard's table. Usually, Hannibal would have been asleep hours ago. Doing his best to push past his soulmates guards so that they might share dreams for once. As they were intended to.

Tonight, he couldn't bring himself to calm down enough to even attempt something like that. The rage that he felt from the surface of his skin to the very core of his soul was too much a tempest storm to ever calm himself enough to fall into unconsciousness.

Witnessing that orderly so casually touch his soulmate and talk as if they were so much more to each other than coworkers had done more than got under his skin. Just when he thought he was finally making real progress with his soulmate he learns about this new set back.

Hannibal took a deep breath and forced his body to relax and his hand to stop squeezing at his bed bars. His hand was going to lock in place if he did that any longer. No sense in letting this tantrum go on any longer. It's not like he could do anything about it in the moment. Never before had Hannibal resented his imprisonment so much.

All those moments his soulmate had been away from him and Hannibal had felt love or affection come through their bond and enjoyed it, dismissing it to be directed at family, friends, or more recent his dogs. Even the faintest hope that it was from thinking of Hannibal himself. Now, all he could think was how many of those times were such emotions triggered by that man.

How many times had Hannibal smiled at that feeling not knowing that another man had made his soulmate feel it?

He felt his resentment rise again and turned roughly in his cot. His jaw clenching to a painful degree. Just trying to distract himself. This just couldn't stand. He just couldn't allow this. Even if he knew eventually his soulmate would cave to the growing feelings between them, he was unwilling to allow another man to fill that spot until he did. Not without *some* type of retribution in exchange.

He had to do something about this.

Chapter 11

“Will Graham? I can take you back now.”

The nurse said kindly gesturing for Will to come with her to the back of the office. Will stood from the uncomfortable waiting chairs.

The nurse took him to a small private medical check up room. Telling Will to take a seat up on the table while she got everything ready for the Doctor to come in. The same old routine as every other annual check up Will’s had.

Weight and height check, blood pressure measure, standard questions of how he was doing and what brought him in ect. Once she was all done with that she let him know the doctor would be in soon and seemed about to leave before seemingly remembering she forgot the last question when she checked the chart again.

“So sorry, one last thing. Have you found your soulmate since the last time you’ve been here?” She asked and Will face twisted in confusion.

“Is that relevant? I’ve never been asked that before?” He said and she smiled at him.

“This year marks you in the late bloomer range when it comes to meeting one's soulmate so we asked with the annual checkup from now on. Given that soulmates can affect each other's physical and mental health, it’s important to consider both charts in some cases and conditions.” She explained to him, and Will looked uncomfortable, debating if he should say.

“I... I have found my soulmate but I’m not comfortable disclosing their identity.” he said and she nodded understanding.

“No worries, your not the first. We actually have a system now that allows for the anonymous request of soulmate connection. It will register you in your soulmate in an official database but that information won’t be ablet o be viewed by anyone unless you want them to. This process is run by a computer program to ensure that when we pull up your soulmates file no identifying personal information will be pulled up like names and such but will still give us their health information in any medical database in the country. Which will also be confidential.” She explained and Will sighed in relief.

She gave him a empathetic look and placed a gentle hand on his shoulder in comfort not realizing how uncomfortable is made him. He tried not to react not wanting to be rude.

“Off the record, there’s no shame in who your soulmate is. We don’t choose our partners and no one in this office has any intention of judging you for it is you wanna tell.” She said with an open invitation for Will tot alk to her about his troubles. Caring for their patients mental health as much of a priority as their physical health. Besides, she’d had plenty of patients before with prisoner soulmates, or even currently underaged ones. Those were typically the two worst situations patients cited with soulmate troubles.

“I’d rather avoid talking about it if I can.” Will said and she nodded in understanding backing off before heading to a cabinet and pulling something out.

“Okay, but I’ll still need a picture of your mark for our records and to make it easier for the database to find your soulmate. If you want we can also send it to an official interpreter to give you some insight into your mark.” She said and Will sighed.

He debated telling her he doubted his soulmate has reported his own mark yet but decided against it. The system will still be able to find him even without it. He knew mark consistency can also be a sign of health condition so understood need for it to be documented to check consistency of it. Sudden changes could be underline side effect of other conditions mental and physical.

“I’d rather not have it sent to an interpreter if it can be helped. No need for more information.” He said and she nodded her eyes pitying now. Knowing his situation must be pretty bad to not want to know anything about his bond personally.

Will took a moment to consider the logistics of photographing his complicated mark and paused for a moment. The nurse chuckled.

“No need to be shy. I’ve seen them located just about everywhere. Once patient had it directly on top of their genital area.” She said to calm what she believed to be shyness and will smiled thankfully at the words going to lift his shirt.

“Oh my.” The nurse could help the words slipping out.

“That is some mark, I’m gonna have to get it from all angles.” She said looking at how it traveled all the way to his back and today was high enough on the back side that a leaf reached all the way to the back of his neck and kind of on the side of his neck. Will’s collar had previously been hiding it.

“Is it moving?” she asked out loud taking photos.

“Yes, it stays mostly in this area but can move up and down a little at time and always sways side to side like being blown in the wind. It’s a little high up today too. Yesterday it was more down and reached past my knee.” Will explained to her and watched her take the note down of what he said. Will looked at it himself again and his brow frowned when he noticed something.

“It’s also changed color.” He said and she looked up more seriously.

“Can you explain?” she asked him, pausing her notes.

“It’s usually a dark shimmering red. Today it's more a dark navey blue shimmer.” Will said calmly and felt unease when he saw her concerned expression.

“Does that mean something?” He asked, and she sighed.

“I don’t want to worry you so it’s best the doctor give you an official answer and more thorough check up. But, marks that aren’t originally blue and turn blue can be indicative of

physical illness. A lot of the times it can just be an oncoming cold or fever, but we have to be carefully about this because typically it takes a significant illness to cause such drastic change to blue so quickly. It's change in position closer to your head could also indicate where the illness is located. But that's just my guess, I haven't seen a mark like yours before. Not one so elaborate and big and certainly not one known to move consistently. That's a very rare bond you have." She said calmly and with a little worry.

Will readjusted uncomfortable at her words.

"Should I be worried?" he asked.

"No, not until the doctor has given you something more concrete." She said with a firm nod of assurance.

Will nodded in understanding with a sigh of relief. The last thing he needed was serious illness on top of every other stressor in his life.

The nurse finished up her pictures and notes, informing will he'd need to come in again when his mark returned to normal so they could get reference pictures of it for future conditions. Will agreed to and she let him know he could put his shirt back on until the doctor came in. Will did just that, the room starting to chill him now.

It wasn't long before the doctor finally arrived, glancing down at the chart as he walked in.

"Hello, Will. It's good to see you back." he said in common greeting and Will responded in kind.

"I see from your chart that you've found your soulmate recently, congratulations." he said still looking down before frowning when he saw the lack of information on said soulmate and easily put two and two together. He looked up apologetic.

"My condolences." He said instead when he realized Will's situation must be complicated. Will chuckled slightly at that. He always enjoyed how straight forward his doctor was yet still considerate. It's why he still came to him even though it was a little out of his way to.

"It's fine." Will said and the doctor relaxed again with a smile and got back to reading the chart.

"Everything else seemed to be fine from what the nurse has checked. Unusual mark activity... moving... marked as normal... color change. Huh, that's a bit concerning. Let's take a look." he said waiting for Will to remove his shirt. Will did so again, preparing himself for the same chill as before.

"Wow, that's it quite the mark you got there my boy." he said, not hiding his surprised reaction like the nurse had attempted to earlier.

"Elaborate too, you sure you don't want an evaluation?" he asked seeing Will had requested not to have it sent to a interpreter.

“Yes, I’m sure. I don’t... I don’t really want to know more about my bond.” He said nervous the man would insist on it for the sake of his health. The doctor shrugged helplessly.

“Well okay then, but it you change your mind just call into the office.” he said. He then put his chart down and came over to will. Not touching him but hovering his hands over his skin and moving them in a way will could follow and just move himself. The man knew he preferred not to be touched if he could help it so Dr. Ravi always wore gloves and always just kind of hovered over his skin and let Will move himself following the hands rather than turning him himself. Will was always thankful for the accommodation. He never even had to remind the man.

Will turned all around and about as the man gazed at his mark.

“So, you said it’s usually a dark red.” He asked lowly and will nodded.

“Almost black it’s so dark.” Will said and the man hummed before having will sit back down on the medical table and moving back.

“Such a drastic color change, especially to a blue of any kind is worrisome. Now blue usually means some kind of physical sickness but what the shade of blue can tell us depends entirely on the patient's medical history. Given you’ve only just got your mark we can’t really take much from the shade. We don’t know what dark blue means for you. How do you feel? Been experiencing any cold or flu like symptoms? Have you started a new medication of any kind?” he asked and Will shook his head.

“No new medication. Though I have been having nightmare again and waking in cold sweats. Sometimes my throat gets a little itchy in cold weather, but I figured that was the dry air or allergies.” Will said, giving his own opinion on his condition. Dr. Ravi nodding in understanding.

“That’s probably most likely. Your Mark seems rather volatile natural, so it wouldn’t be too far fetched to think simple seasonal incoming cold or allergies could change it’s color, but I’d like to look a little more at you just incase.” he said and Will nodded giving permission to be touched.

Dr. Ravi reached out and felt along his neck and behind his ears for swelling or signs of infection. He then pulled out his scoop and checked his ear and throat.

“Mmmm, throats a little red... doesn’t seem like anything too bad though. Have you had a cough?” he asked and Will gave a negative sound as best he could with his mouth wide open.

“Alright then... best bet you have a cold coming in and your mark is just over sensitive to physical change. It’s positioning higher up likely means the cold started in your throat, but it does concern me a little it’s gone pass your neck to a little on your head. Worst and rarest case senior, it’s an infection of some kind. I highly doubt that, so I’m going to prescribe you some cold medicine but if you don’t feel yourself getting any better in the next couple of days I want you to come back in.” Dr. Ravi said with a reassuring smile at Will.

Writing down his prescription. Will nodded in understanding, thinking of the closest pharmacy from here as he'd have to walk before walking to bus station to get as close as he could back home before calling a taxi. God not having a car sucked.

"Actually..." Dr. Ravi said getting up and grabbing something. Two little individual pills and holding them out to Wil.

"Can you take these please?" he asked and Will just shrugged, he trusted his doctor. He took them and took a small drink of water from the tap in a cup. Dr. Ravi stared at him and his mark for a little over a minute and Will watched amazed with the now confidently smiling doctor as it changed from it's dark shade to a lighter shade.

"What was that?" Will asked his doctor.

"Just a little antihistamine to test if I was right or not about the cold. Typically if something enters the body to help and it starts working the shade will change. Since it's lighter now we can assume that the lighter it gets before eventually turning back to its original color will be your best way to gage yourself getting better." he said and Will nodded still staring at the lighter color, touching the moving mark in amazement. Never had such an obvious body gage before.

"I still want you to come in if your symptoms get worse, but I think it's safe to say your good to go for now." he said and will finally put his shirt back on.

"Thank you, Dr. Ravi." He said with a thankful smile.

"Of course, Will, just sign out with the nurse out front and you have a good day." he said smiling and Will wished him another goodbye.

Walking out the doctors office, confident he would be just fine after a little medicine and sleep.

Chapter 12

For the next few days Will has established a routine of checking his soulmate mark for color changes and taking his meds in the morning.

When he woke it was always back to that dark navey blue from before but once he took his medicine it always tampered out into a baby blue or sky color. He hasn't exactly gotten fully better over the weekend like his doctor implied he would but Will ahs always been easy to take illness and slow to recover so the man didn't stress to much about it. He figured it was bound to get worse before it got better.

Which explained the fluctuation of color during his day and sometimes worsening of symptoms. Nighttime was typically when he felt the worse, but it didn't exactly help he already had sleep issues and chronic nightmares. He couldn't tell if his night sweats were from that or from illness. Either way Will decided to just give it a bit more time before going in for another evaluation and likely medicine change. His health insurance only covered one free checkup a year after all. There would be a co-pay if he went again, and Will had to save for a car now so it was best not to spend any money for a while if he could help it.

"Will! Why is all your coffee so weak?" Matthew's frustrated voice could be heard coming from his kitchen and into the bathroom.

Will had been running a little late that morning so he told Matthew to come in and have some coffee while he got ready. The man looked gorger than usual, and Will could tell it was really affecting him mood if only because he was using his name for once. Will walked out the bathroom after putting a shirt on.

"I'm saving money for a car. The cheap stuff is good enough." Will said walking out and to him, Matthew frown at that.

"*or* I can just drive you around for a little longer and you can allow yourself the luxury of real coffee." The man said with a sip and grimace from his own cup. He set it aside.

"Let's hurry up. We're stopping by a Starbucks or PJ's or something. I can't allow this. Pumpkin, if you won't buy it for yourself I'm gonna have to add 'coffee for Will' on my grocery list." Matthew said as if it personally offended him Will would drink something like that. Which maybe it did, Matthew was *very* serious about his coffee.

"Knock yourself out." Will said having learned not to argue with the man. If he said no the man would just buy it anyways and level it on his door step. Will didn't want to give him any excuse to creep over to his house without telling him first.

"Ready?" Will asked grabbing his jacket and Matthew did the same.

"Yeah, let get to work. I have a feeling it's going ot be a long day." Matthew said a tired sigh coming from his mouth already. Will just rolled his eyes at his dramatics.

The man just really isn't the same before coffee.

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"Did you bring the book back, dear?" Hannibal asked leaning against the bars and smiling at Will.

Will could feel an embarrassed blush on his face as he pulled out the scrap book of the dogs. He'd brought it again since Hannibal hadn't been able to finish reading through it last Friday. He blamed the desire to share the rest on his completion anxiety and not because he wanted to connect with Hannibal or anything like that.

"Why thank you." Hannibal said, taking the book through the bars and opening it. Easily finding where he'd left off.

"I believe we left off on Buster." He said sweetly and Will took a moment to debate if he wanted to pretend he was uninterested before sighing defeated and turning, pulling his chair closer to the bars and leaning closer so he could look see the book while Hannibal read allowed. As if he wasn't the one to write it. Hannibal turned his chair as well. More side-by-side with the bars.

It was almost as if they were sitting next to each other. If not for the bars they would be intimately close. Hannibal would argue they were regardless of the bars.

They made quick work of the rest of the book. Having only needed to go through three more of the dogs before they had finished it. The buzz of pleasant feelings between them mixing again as Will allowed the bond to open for the little while it took to get through the book.

"May I keep it this time, Mylimasis?" Hannibal asked and Will lips pursed in uncertainty. Not lieking the idea of anything being in that cage that could be traced back to him.

"I assure you, I won't allow anyone to touch it but me." Hannibal said and from the gleam in his eyes Will was certain he'd be willing to do some pretty deplorable things to keep that promise. Will just sighed and leaned back in his chair. Turning away and pulling his hand out of the cage where he was going to take the book before. Hannibal smiled and took that as his yes.

He carefully closed the book and set it inconspicuously on one of his many shelves to hide in plain sight. Will resisted his unease at seeing it so visible, knowing putting it anywhere else would be more than suspicious.

"While I have loved getting to know your furry companions-" Hannibal started and Will could already feel his lips titling up in a smile at the description.

"-I would love to get to know about others in your life." He said and Will let him see his furrowed brow.

“Family, friends… lovers.” Hannibal said, and Will thought if he was trying to hide that predatory gleam in his eyes he was failing miserably. Will gave him an unimpressed look and crossed his arms at the bland attempt to learn about his non-existent love life.

“I do not wish to dance around this subject Mylimasis, like our other conversation. No matter how good of a dance partner you are.” He said with a flirty end to the words that Will allowed a smile of amusement for.

“I couldn’t help but notice that coworker of yours who seemed to be particularly comfortable with placing his hands on your body. I don’t imagine you are the type of person to allow just anyone to do that, my sweet.” Hannibal said, speaking as if he hadn’t taken the last couple of days to learn as much as he could about Matthew Brown. Hannibal was always the type to prefer as much information on his enemies as possible. Information was power after all.

“I’ve never been particularly good at sharing and I’m finding that this-“ He gestured between them as if to indicated the complicated bond they have.

“-seems to be no different.” He said honestly a threat behind his eyes and veiled in his polite but honest words. Will’s head titled in thought at that.

Will knows having his currently only, and probably best friend, threatened by his cannibalistic, serial killer of a soulmate should worry or at least bother him in some way but oddly enough Will doesn’t think it would be such an easy fight for Hannibal to win against Matthew even if he had been his lover. Matthew hid it well, but he seemed equally unhinged in his own way and Will had seen the man shirtless. He was no push over.

Hannibal seemed a skilled and traditional fighter much like his personality. The kind of man that could incapacitate his opponent in a few moves. While at the same time likely favored ambush attacks. Meanwhile Matthew seemed more the wild card. No traditional fighting experience but a reserve of raw strength and energy and certainly willing to bite someone mid fight if he had to.

If Matthew and Hannibal ever got in a one-on-one fight it would certainly be a spectacle. That is if Hannibal could ever manage to actually be in the room with the man without a cage separating them both.

The humorous image of the two psychopaths battling it out through the bars caused a snort to escape Will. That is before a frowned marred his face as he realized what he was laughing at. Disappointed in himself for letting his humor get so dark again.

“Interesting.” Hannibal suddenly said distracted by Will reaction to his words. Will looked over to him confused, drawn out his thoughts.

“You laugh at the thought of violence and take genuine amusement from the suggestion of it but it’s always followed with a sense of shame.” Hannibal said analytically and Will was instantly reminded the man was a psychiatrist before he was in here. A wave of intense annoyance was sent his way as Will turned his head.

“Not found of psychoanalysis then?” Hannibal asked and only dignified that with an annoyed sigh and a small glare sent Hannibal’s way. The man hummed in understanding.

“I’ll take it under advisement.” Hannibal said but seemed unwilling to suggest he wouldn’t do it again in the future.

Alright that was Will’s cue to check out for the rest of the day. Hannibal smiled amused as always when Will moved his chair away from the cage again and leaned back. Taking his work hat and placing it over his face, while propping his feet up on the table in front of him. His most direct sign of telling Hannibal he was ignoring him as he pretended to sleep.

“I know you want your alone time now Darling but I feel the need to give you one more honest *promise*. I do not know what I will do if I continue to see another show you the affection this *prison* has denied me the ability to.” Hannibal said and Will couldn’t help but move that hat just enough to show one unimpressed eye.

If Hannibal thought Will was going to let the man have any say over what he did in his life then Will was going to have to give him a more direct reminder about the exact position he was in.

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Will did not have to wait long for the rest of his shift to end and to hear the tell-tell sound of two sets of feet heading his way.

“Have a good night, Mylimasis.” Hannibal said politely as he always did when it was time for Will to go. Will in recent times has at least waved an absent hand at him but this time around he had other priorities. Not even waiting for Matthew to get fully down the hall before standing up and walking over to him. Matthew looked alarmed and flinched like Will might hit him when he got to close in his stride. That is until Will smacked a large peck on his cheek.

Right in Hannibal’s sightline.

The assault that was Hannibal’s silent fury was too much for even Will to block off. A vicious smirk was pulling at Will’s face as he felt those eyes staring holes into his back.

Matthew had pulled back his jaw hanging a little as a hand came up to his cheek, where he was now blushing. A smile stretching across his beyond pleased face.

“Well, you’re in a good mood.” He said excitedly. Will just smirked his way, enjoying how Matthew’s reaction was making the cloud of ire surrounding Hannibal worse.

“I knew our morning together was good, but not *that* good, Babe.” Matthew said leaning in and Will let him get away with a return cheek kiss.

Will didn’t even bother turning around to look as he was the one to initiate the touching and wrap his arm around Matthew’s waist for once. Matthew leaned into it easily and wrapping his arm around Will too.

Oh, what a dangerous game he was playing.

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

> Okay this chapter took a while for two reasons, I'm trying a new system where I let a random selector chose which of my (over 266) stories gets worked on next for the sake of fairness, but mostly because im pretty sure im developing carpel tunnel and my wrist legit needs a break outside of work and grad school.
>
> Edit: you guys are so blood thirsty 🤣

"Go away Matthew!" Will yelled through his door at the insistent knocking from the man.

"Ah come on Will! You can't stay in there *every* weekend. You need to actually do something with your days off." Matthew insisted.

He'd told, not asked, Will that they were going out to a party one of their coworkers was throwing. Nothing big or club-like. Just a simple housewarming party to celebrate them finally being able to buy one and move out of their apartment.

Will had refused to even properly acknowledge said plans.

"Did I not say I would shoot you if you show up uninvited!" Will shouted through the door.

"Oh, stop being so dramatic Willy. You wouldn't shoot me." Matthew said back with an amused scoff.

The sound of shotgun cocking could be heard through the door.

"You'd really shoot me?! Your *only* friend?!" Matthew yelled sounding equal parts offended and entirely too pleased by the threat.

"Go away Matthew!" Will yelled again and Matthew groaned in frustration.

"Oh, come on Pumpkin! It will be fun! I promise! If we're there for at least an hour... no thirty minutes and you wanna leave then I'll take you home!" Matthew said and there was a pause of silence. Matthew was now contemplating moving down below the range a bullet could fly through the wall.

"...Just thirty minutes?" Will asked hesitantly, his voice low enough Matthew had to put his ear on the door to hear.

"Yep! Just thirty minutes to give it a try and I'll take you home and we can just have a movie night or whatever. Or you know, you might find yourself enjoying it and want to stay longer."

Matthew said optimistically.

The door opened to Will's disbelieving look. He was still holding the shotgun in hand, thankfully aimed down tot eh ground. He snorted in amused annoyance at Matthew's words.

"I do this and you don't bother me for the next three weekends." Will said and Matthew nodded in agreement a smile growing on his face. Will turned around leaving the door open for him.

"And next time I *will* shoot you Brown."

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"What am I doing here?" Will asked himself lowly, looking up at the house that had far too many cars around and in front of it to be someplace Will would want to spend his time.

"Having *fun*. You'll thank me later." Matthew claimed and wrapped an arm around his waist like usual. Not just the casual way he typically did but in clear attempt to keep him from escaping.

"I do know how to make plans you know?" Will said with a sigh. He wasn't as anti-social as Matthew seemed to think he was.

"Oh yeah? What are you doing tomorrow?" Matthew said as if proving a point. Will smirked at that.

"Going to a dinner party." He said and Matthew smug knowing look dropped.

"Bullshit." He said and Will chuckled and kept walking up to the front door even though Matthew had stopped.

"Wait seriously?" Matthew called after him, following. Will didn't dignify him with an answer.

Alana and her wife, Margot, had invited Will to dinner so Will, in an attempt to be more social and to thank Alana for her kindness last they met, had agreed to come over and let them cook for him. He knew if Matthew got anymore details about that he'd insist on coming and Will needed at least one day a week he didn't have to see the exhausting extravert.

"You don't know my life, Matthew." He teased him and Matthew smiled seeming ready to retaliate when the front door opened. It was Susan the soulmate to Micheal, the coworker that had invited them to his party. Well, he invited Matthew but people at work tended to assume Matthew and Will were a package deal for some fucking reason Will can't comprehend.

"Welcome! You two are the last to arrive." She said happily, glad to see everyone showed up.

“Thanks for having us.” Matthew said on both their behalf and Will just nodded in agreement.

“Come in, come in! We we’re all just enjoying some wine in the parlor before dinner is ready.” She said and they came in receiving greetings around the room when spotted.

“Red or white?” Jake, their coworker and host of the party, said holding up the two options.

“White for me.” Matthew said going over to the only two open seats left in the small room of fifteen or so people.

“Red.” Will said as he sat next to him. A little space between them. He wasn’t drunk enough yet to let Matthew climb all over him like he usually did when they went out drinking. Before that first night out Will didn’t think Matthew could get more touchy but apparently even he had boundaries for alcohol to take down.

“Okay, now that everyone’s here we have an announcement.” Jakes partner, Ashely is what Will thinks her name is, stood up and addressed the room. Jake coming next to her with a smile of his own. Everyone watched them attentatively, some with expectant looks.

“We’re pregnant! She said excitedly and Jake smiled with all thirty-two of his proud teeth.

“I fucking knew it! Give it up!” Ray, break room gambler, stood up and held his hands out to the others. A few grumbles around the room as people pulled out their wallets to give it over. Will watched with absent amusement. He hadn’t known that people at work were apparently so close. He’s starting to get why Matthew pushed him so much to hang out with them. It’s still bothersome but at least he gets the persistence now.

Matthew tapped Will on the shoulder to get his attention.

“Let me borrow a twenty.” He grumbled and Will snorted.

“I’ll pay you back. I was just sure I was gonna win so I didn’t bring my wallet.” Matthew said with a eye roll. Trying to avoid Will’s teasing which was more like pure berating when he got into it. Fun on most nights, but annoying when Matthew had nothing to throw back. Will took pity on him and gave over his emergency twenty. The twenty was promptly jerked from his fingers by Ray.

“Thank you very much.” He said with a smirk directed at Matthew.

“What?” Jake chuckled, He and his wife looking around in disbelief at the exchanging hands.

“Oh, come on man. You find your soulmate and you two are married within the year, you buy this house the next year, the next step was obvious.” Ray said not looking up from counting his bills. Breaking up and passing out other people’s share who bet the same as him.

“Congratulation by the way.” Cynthia said, seeing as no one had yet. A round of congratulation went around the room. Ray in particular was smiling wide and patting them

both on the back. Happier than ever they were having a baby, especially given they'd picked just the time he'd bet they'd have one.

"Is it going to be a boy or girl?" Someone else piped up. Will wasn't sure he knew their voice and Matthew's big head was blocking his view of the room. Unwilling to sit up from the very nice love seat, Will just reached out and pulled Matthew by his shoulder to lean back.

Matthew took that as an excuse to move closer to him. He would have tried to wrap his arm around Will's shoulder too if he was a few more glasses in. He knew better then to try while Will was still completely sober.

"We're not sure, we want it to be a surprise." Jacke said pulling Ashely more comfortably in his arms, his hand resting low on her belly. Her own hand tangling with his. The good atmosphere of the couple was affecting everyone around the room as smiles could be seen all around.

An intentional groan of envy was heard among them.

"That is so unfucking fair." Marianna said with a pinched up face but a congratulating smile still in place to soften it.

"Who's life is just so back-to-back perfect? I'm over thirty and *still* haven't found my soulmate." She said with a more annoyed groan. Laughs went around.

"Same here sister!" A male voice called out, Will didn't know that person either. He took a catalogue around and figured he knew about half the people here and the rest were unknown to him. So, it was likely there were at least three teams here. Will himself was technically on two, he imagined everyone else was part of a third team he wasn't on or at least partnered with a member of the teams.

"Hey, enjoy being single while you can because once you do find them you'll never know a moment alone again." A woman said and then laughed when Jackie, Will's coworker, smacked her arm. Probably her soulmate.

"Oh, come on Babe! Be honest! Other soulmates, James, Kimmy! Be honest, don't you get tired of each other sometimes?" She said and the young couple exchanged looks with shrugs and reluctant tones of agreement. Careful of how the other was reacting.

"Thank you! Matthew, Will, how about you two?" The woman said turning to them with an expectant look. Looking for others to agree so her soulmate would stop glaring at her for the earlier comment. Everyone else was just enjoying the show. Will's guessing they fought often at these things.

"Well-" Matthew began with a smile already growing on his face as he leaned more against Will. Attaching to his side like the energy draining leech he was. Seriously, how is this annoying social butterfly Will's best friend?

Before Matthew could once again lie about them being together will decided to just destroy that little fun past time of his and set the record straight. If only so there was a clear

understanding by everyone Matthew was delusional and Will was being held hostage in their friendship.

“We are very much not soulmates.” Will mumbled out loud enough to be heard but in his usual soft tones. His eyes directly on Matthew’s face just to watch the satisfying glare he got in return at popping that bubble of amusement.

A chorus of disbelieving sounds could be heard by half the room. All who had seen Will and Matthew interact at work.

“Could have fooled me.” Jake said with a raised brow. A sentiment shared by most everyone in the room.

“Matthew just doesn’t understand the concept of personal space.” Will reiterated, more a grumble this time. He also made a point of moving over to lean away from the man in question on for Matthew to move with him and follow. Will just sighed in defeat and Matthew smiled in pleasure of getting his way.

“You know you love me, Pumpkin. I’ll crack through that hard exterior one day.” He said confidently turning back to the room and leaning his head directly on Will’s chest now. Shamelessly smiling with that delusional optimism in his voice as he snuggled in closer.

Laughs could be heard around the room at their antics.

“What are you going to do when you find your soulmate Matthew?”

“Or when Will finds his?” a couple of people asked him.

Will wonders what they’d think if they knew he already had and still let Matthew get away with this behavior?

“That won’t happen. Clearly the universe made a mistake and just delayed out marks.” Matthew said with intentional humor, so everyone knew he was just joking. More laughs rang through the room and even Will cracked a smile behind his glass.

“Okay, but seriously, you can’t hang all over him when one of you finds their other half.” Marianna said after settling her laugh, genuinely wanting an answer.

“Look, here...” Matthew said lifting up and reaching over for the coffee table. He opened the drawer and pulled out a marker. He reached over and took Will’s free hand and quickly doodled on it before moving to his own hand. Will looked down to see a heart with an arrow through it.

“There, we have matching marks. Happy?” Matthew teased showing off his hand and Will’s. Will looked back at his hand again before looking at Matthew calmly with a glare.

“That better wash off.” He said with an underlined threat in his tone. Another chorus of laughter went around the room as Matthew practically swooned at the hostility.

More laughter and chuckling could be heard through the room.

“Well, soulmates or not you guys are a good match.” Some Will didn’t know said. Hums and words agreement went around the room. Matthew elbowed Will in the stomach just as he tried to refute it. Which Will responded very pettily to by shoving him back but only in the arm with his elbow and three times as hard. Matthew gave an audible grunt as he turned away and rubbed his own arm.

“...worth it.” Will heard him mumble under his breath and rolled his eyes but decided not to correct them that they were not dating. He imagines protesting would make it just seem all the more true anyways. He imagined he only really had to deal with this as long as it took for Matthew to find his own soulmate and finally leave him alone.

Will felt eyes on him and looked up to see everyone still watching them with amusement and what can only be called ‘aww’ faces. Like they were the cutest things since puppies. It made Will incredibly uncomfortable to be the center of attention like this.

God, he really shouldn’t have let himself get talked into coming tonight.

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Later that night Will would curse Matthew to Hell and back as he struggled and failed to remove the permanent ink from his skin.

Chapter 14

“Thanks for the ride.”

Will said to Matthew as he tried to hope out of the car quickly, and leave the suspiciously well dress man behind. Matthew locked the doors of the car on side and sent a amused glare at Will.

“Oh, no you don’t.” He said and Will glared back at him.

“You're not leaving this car until you tell me why I can’t come in too Graham.” He said with a weak attempt to seem intimidating by calling him by name. Will just raised an eyebrow and moved to take his suit jacket off, wrapping it around his hand. Matthew watched in confused concern.

“What are you doing...?” he asked hesitantly and Will took a deep breath turned his face away from the glass of the window and went to swing at it. Matthew moved faster and grab the arm. Barely stopping it from making impact with his window.

“Jesus Christ, Love! You don’t have to threaten my window.” Matthew said equal parts worried and amused. He hit the lock button and Will gave a bored but satisfied expression as he climbed out.

“Don’t threaten *me* next time Brown. I’ll call your bluff every time.” Will said calmly, entirely serious in his intention to destroy Matthew’s shit if he had to.

“Alright fine! But seriously can’t I come to dinner?” Matthew asked pouting as he stuck his head out his own window watching Will get out and walk around the car to get to the lovely town house they were in front of. He turned to Matthew and gave him a disgusted look.

“Haven’t I given you enough of my time this weekend?” He asked fatigue clear in his voice. At this point Matthew was like a leech Will couldn’t pry off. Sucking all his energy and life force away. Will would have to seriously put in a rush on his car so he didn’t have to rely on the man for rides so much.

“No amount of time is enough for me, Baby.” Matthew said a little too honestly. Will wondered if he was the crazier one for allowing that insane obsession to grow. He should probably distance from the man eventually, at least until he found his own soul mate.

Will could live with, and even welcomed, friends a mentally unstable as him so long as that instability was not *directed* at him. He turned to Matthew and looked at him seriously leaning against the car.

“If I cut you off tonight, what would you do?” Will asked genuinely curious knowing Matthew was insane enough to answer him honestly.

“I’d stalk you endlessly.” Matthew said with a causal nod of his head a look of consideration. Will just hummed.

“Like eventually kill me kind of stalk or content to watch silently stalk?” Will asked in the same tone. Matthew’s eyes squinted as he considered the question with his own hum.

“That’s a roll of the dice, Honey Bun.” He said unsure himself. Will sighed at that, annoyed at the uncertainty of the situations.

“What about if we continue like now?” Will asked and Matthew perked up a look of certainty on his face.

“Oh! In that case I’m good with just this.” He said with a gesture at the air between them. Content to be Will’s closes (Note: Only) clingy friend. Will sighed annoyed again.

“I figured as much.” He said with a resigned look. Matthew just chuckled with soft fondness.

Both their attention was pulled away from the conversation when the door to the house they were in front of opened and revealed Alana who waved at Will, making sure he saw her so he knew he had the right house. Will lifted a hand to show he saw here, Matthew did as well to be polite.

“So, who’s she? You don’t exactly have any other friend, Dear.” Matthew asked curiously.

“Is she a *lady* friend?” he asked suggestively with a wiggle of his eyebrows.

“I’m not above impromptu threesome.” He added and Will could help the tired but amused snort. And pushed at Matthew’s face back into the car.

“Shut up, Brown.” He said as Matthew just laughed, grabbing the hand that had mushed his face and planting a kiss on the back.

“Seriously though... found your soulmate Love?” Matthew asked clearly bothered by the thought but unable to come up with any other reason why Will would waste one of his precious nights of solitude out socializing unless Matthew makes him. Will did laugh at that.

“Alana, being my soulmate. *That’s* the best joke you’ve told so far Matthew.” Will said amused, and also expertly dodging the actually question. Matthew looked beyond pleased at the words. Grinning widely not just at the gift that was Will’s laugh but also at the denial of him being her soulmate.

“Alana’s just an old classmate who did me a favor. So, I’m having lunch with her and her *wife* .” Will said pointedly and Matthew gave an ‘ah’ of realization.

“Threat averted, you can leave now.” Matthew said finally letting go of his hand. Will rolle dhs eyes again.

“What *will* you do when one of us finds their soulmate?” Will asked again, always curious how that cross wired brain of his worked.

“We’ll see when that days comes won’t we!” He said cheery and grinned again before leaning over to steal a kiss on the peck of his cheek and drive off before Will could smack him again. His typical goodbye.

“Bye, Buttercup! Pick you up later!” He screamed through the window.

Will was unmoved as he watched him go. He then turned up and looked at a patiently waiting Alana who’d been watching the whole thing from a distance and unable to actually hear the conversation.

“Hey Will.” She said pleasantly as he was finally within ear shot.

“You know your boyfriend could have stayed for dinner. There’s plenty food.” She offered, wondering if Will would want to call him back before he got too far. Will just waved his hand dismissively.

“Not my boyfriend, just my stalker.” He said casually and Alana chuckled thinking he was joking.

“Well, then come on in, dinners ready.” She said glad for how prompt he was. Will nodded and let himself be escorted in.

When Will walked in he was ushered in to the dinning room just a ways away from the front door. A woman was setting the table and smiled at him welcomingly when he came in.

“Hello, I’m Margot Verger.” She said pleasantly and held a hand out for him to shake. Will looked at it and braced himself to take it and appear polite.

“Oh, Maggie, Love. Will hates being touched.” Alana said with a smile at them both.

“Ah.” Margot said in realization and put her hand down. Will relaxed and felt much more pleased to be there. He appreciated the respect of his boundaries.

“Have a seat then Will.” Margot offered instead and Will nodded as he pulled out the chair to sit.

“Thank you for having me.” He said again, calmly.

“It’s my pleasure! To tell you the truth we recently just moved here, and it was a real relief to run into someone I know already.” Alana said with a thankful smile of her own.

“Oh, well... I’m glad I could be of help too.” Will said and they descended in what could be called a slightly awkward silence. The sound of cutlery hitting plates being the only noise. Will would have been content to sit through it until the end of the meal but he’d decided to actually be social tonight so he gave an effort. He took a breath and looked to the women.

“So, tell me, how did you meet?” He asked them. The best question when meeting a couple. They were typically happy to talk endlessly about their own relationships and show off their love for one another. It allowed Will to just sit back and listen not having to entertain it himself.

“Oh, that’s my favorite story.” Alana said and Margot was smiling at the mention of it. Will gave himself a mental pat on the back.

He then settled in to eat while the women recounted the romantic tale of how they met by chance with Margot scheduling an appointment with her and going through multiple sessions before the two of them finally locked eyes. The joy they had waking up the next day and finding their marks.

How Alana had called Margot immediately and instead of mentioning the marks her first words had been to remove Margot as her patient. Unwilling to be unethical for even a moment. Margot told this with great amusement while remembering it. Saying that at least she’d referred her to someone else first before doing so. Then and only then did she asks Margot out that very next day to a coffee date.

Will would admit it was a cute story, certainly more holism than his own. He also saw the similarities and couldn’t help but wondered how common it was for people to bond with their patients. The number seemed oddly high so far.

The conversation was interrupted with the ringing of Alana’s phone which she looked ot to turn off until she saw the screen.

“Oh, I’m so sorry. This could be work I need to get it.” Alana said looking down at the phone then up apologetic at her rude behavior. Both Will and Margot nonverbally brushing her off, understanding the need for her to leave.

She nodded in thanks to them as she stood up to go to a spare room for privacy.

“I’ll be back in just a moment.”

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“Alana Bloom, speaking.”

“Hello, Alana, this is Jack Crawford.”

“Special Agent Crawford, it’s good to hear from you again. What can I help you with?”

“I’m sure you’ve seen the most recent news involving the Tooth Fairy killings?”

“Yes, they seem horrific.”

“I may need your consultation on this one. We’ve hit a wall with our own experts.”

“This type of killer isn’t really my thing.”

“I know it’s a bit unusual and possibly out of your wheel house but your still our best option.... You also happen to know some other experts we’d like you to potentially introduce us to later to help with the case.”

“...Okay... I can do my best but i can’t make you any promises and whoever you’re thinking of I may not be in contact with them anymore. I’ve had a lot of college leave the field through my career.”

“I understand Dr. Bloom. Thank you for your consideration in this.”

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“So, was your soulmate too busy to come in?” Margot asked him suddenly and Will gave a confused expression. She smiled at the look.

“The man who dropped you off. I could hear him screaming goodbye even from here.” She said amused and Will just gave another annoyed huff.”

“So, was he busy?” She asked again conversationally and Will shook his head.

“No, um... I mean, he’s not my soulmate, just a friend.” Will explained and she looked interested.

“I didn’t take you for a risk taker Will. Dating someone not your soulmate is pretty rare.” She continued and Will gave an amused expression. Enjoying her candid words and the way she didn’t bother with over-the-top pleasantries.

“Not dating him either but *he* may tell you otherwise.” Will said just to watch her further amused expression. Before she could pry further into his private business Alana came back in the room.

“So sorry about that.” She said again as she sat back down across from Will and next to her wife. Her hand naturally going to hold her’s. Their fingers with their soulmate marks touching.

“What were you two talking about?” Alana asked and Margot spoke up before Will could.

“We we’re discussing Will’s not-soulmate, not-boyfriend.” She said with amused look at the glare Alana sent her for prying into other people’s business. She let it go though as Will seemed unbothered. She let her own curiosity take over.

“I am surprised to hear though you're not dating. He seemed *very* into you.” Alana teased and Will smiled at her finally lightening up and not being so stiff.

“Yeah, I know. He’s not shy about it.” Will said and the girls chuckled.

“Why not go for it? Are you holding out for your soulmate?” Margot asked and Will shook his head.

“No... I’ve already met my soulmate and I don’t see that going anywhere but I’m not the type of person to delude myself into thinking any other kind of relationship would work out. Besides, Matthew is *not* the datable type.” Will said with another sip of his wine. All their food finished by now as they were just having conversation.

“Well, that’s understandable.” Alana said, grabbing her wife’s hand and pinching her side subtly so that she doesn’t asks more of Will.

A knock was heard at the door that interrupted the good atmosphere. Alana stood up, being closets. She walked over and opened the door.

“Oh! Hello!” She said sounding pleasantly surprised.

“Hello, I’m here to pick up Will?” Matthew’s voice could be heard. He peaked into the doorway which was in clear view of the dinning room.

“Matthew? Aren’t you early?” Will asked confused and Matthew raised a brow at him.

“Check the time, Babe.” He said and Will glanced down at his phone to see it was well pass the hour he meant to stay and Matthew had left him multiple text and miss calls, probably trying to tell him that he was outside.

“Oh.” Will said in slight surprised.

“You ready?” He asked and Will nodded.

“Yeah, just give me a sec.” Will said and he nodded. Matthew turned to the girls and gave them a nod as well.

“Good meeting you ladies. Will I’ll be outside.” He said kindly before heading out again. Will could tell he was tired as he didn’t take this time to weasel his way in and get to know Will’s other friends.

“Well I had better be heading out before Matthew decides it’s not worth it to wait outside anymore.” Will said getting up and grabbing his jacket. Alana nodding and Margot standing as well.

“It was good having you over Will.” Alana said with a smile he returned.

“Yeah, it was good to catch up and not have to cook my own dinner for once.” Will said in slight jest. The girls gave light chuckles.

“It was nice meeting you.” Margot added.

“It was nice meeting you too Margot.” Will said. He started to leave when Alana stopped him.

“Hey Will we should really do this again some time.” She said and Will nodded.

“That sounds nice.” He said actually meaning it.

“...and if you would be amendable I’d love to have you as the occasional consultant in cases sometimes?” Alana said and Will looked less pleased.

“I’ll have to think about that. I’ve been trying to avoid profile work, at least for a while.” Will explained and she nodded in understanding if a little bit disappointed not having made a guaranteed contact in the city yet.

“Well, if your ever looking for a little side money just let me know.” She said instead and Will smiled before nodding in agreement.

He headed out soon after that and into the car where Matthew had left the door open for him. Once he was in and buckled Matthew started to take off.

“So, how was dinner?” Matthew asked absently and Will gave a small smile as he looked his way.

“It was actually... not bad.”

End Notes

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